LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

OF

SCOTTISH LIFE.

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LIGHTS AND SHADOWS OF SCOTTISH LIFE,

A SELECTION FROM THE PAPERS OF THE LATE ARTHUR AUSTIN.

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TO

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BARONET,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT

OF ESTEEM AND ADMIRATION,

BY HIS OBLIGED FRIEND,

THE EDITOR.

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NOTE.

The Elder's Funeral—The Snow Storm—and The Forgers, are now republished.

ERRATA.

Page 96, line 11, *for* Wellington, *read* Wellesley.

Pages 258, line 21, and 262, lines 13 and 17, *for* Marion, *read* Christian.

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THE LILY OF LIDDESDALE.

The Country all around rang with the beauty of Amy Gordon; and although it was not known who first bestowed upon her the appellation, yet now she bore no other than the Lily of Liddesdale. She was the only child of a shepherd, and herself a shepherdess. Never had she been out of the valley in which she was born; but many had come from the neighbouring districts just to look upon her as she rested with her flock on the hill-side, as she issued smiling from her father's door, or sat in her serener loveliness in the kirk on Sabbath-day. Sometimes there are living beings in nature as beautiful as in romance; reality surpasses imagination; and we see breathing, brightening, and moving before our eyes, sights dearer to our hearts than any we ever beheld in the land of sleep.

It was thus that all felt who looked on the Lily of Liddesdale. She had grown up under the dews, and breath, and light of heaven, among the solitary hills; and, now that she had attained to perfect womanhood, nature rejoiced in the beauty that gladdened the stillness of these undisturbed glens. Why should this one maiden have been created lovelier than all others? In what did her surpassing loveliness consist? None could tell; for had the most imaginative poet described this maiden, something that floated around her, an air of felt but unspeakable grace and lustre, would have been wanting in his picture. Her face was pale, yet tinged with such a faint and leaf-like crimson, that though she well deserved the name of the Lily, yet was she at times also like unto the Rose. When asleep, or in silent thought, she was like the fairest of all the lilied brood; but when gliding along the braes, or singing her songs by the river side, she might well remind one of that other brighter and more dazzling Flower. Amy Gordon knew that she was beautiful. She knew it from the eyes that in delight met hers, from the tones of so many gentle voices, from words of affection from the old, and love from the young, from the sudden smile that met her when, in the morning, she tied up at the little mirror her long raven hair, and from the face and figure that looked up to her when she stooped to dip her pitcher in the clear mountain-well. True that she was of lowly birth, and that her manners were formed in a shepherd's

hut, and among shepherdesses on the hill. But one week passed in the halls of the highly born would have sufficed to hide the little graceful symptoms of her humble lineage, and to equal her in elegance with those whom in beauty she had far excelled. The sun and the rain had indeed touched her hands, but nature had shaped them delicate and small. Light were her footsteps upon the verdant turf, and through the birch-wood glades and down the rocky dells she glided or bounded along, with a beauty that seemed at once native and alien there, like some creature of another clime that still had kindred with this, an Oriental antelope among the roes of a Scottish forest.

Amy Gordon had reached her nineteenth summer —and as yet she knew of love only as she had read of it in old Border songs and ballads. These ancient ditties were her delight—and her silent soul was filled with wild and beautiful traditions. In them love seemed, for the most part, something sad, and whether prosperous or unhappy, alike terminating in tears. In them the young maiden was spoken of as dying in her prime, of fever, consumption, or a pining heart; and her lover, a gallant warrior, or a peaceful shepherd, killed in battle, or perishing in some midnight storm In them, too, were sometimes heard blessed voices whispering affection beneath the greenwood tree, or among the shattered cliffs overgrown with light-waving trees in some long, deep, solitary glen. To Amy Gordon, as she chaunted to herself, in the blooming

or verdant desert, all these various traditionary lays, love seemed a kind of beautiful superstition belonging to the memory of the dead. In such tales she felt a sad and pleasant sympathy; but it was as with something far remote—although at times the music of her own voice, as it gave an affecting expression to feelings embodied in such artless words, touched a chord within her heart, that dimly told her that heart might one day have its own peculiar and overwhelming love.

The Summer that was now shining had been calm and sunny beyond the memory of the oldest shepherd. Never had nature seemed so delightful to Amy's eyes and to Amy's heart; and never had she seemed so delightful to the eyes and the hearts of all who beheld her with her flock. Often would she wreathe the sprigs of heather round her raven ringlets, till her dark hair was brightened with a galaxy of richest blossoms. Or dishevelling her tresses, and letting fall from them that shower of glowing and balmy pearls, she would bind them up again in simpler braiding, and fix on the silken folds two or three water-lilies, large, massy, and whiter than the snow. Necklaces did she wear in her playful glee, of the purple fruit that feed the small birds in the moors, and beautiful was the gentle stain then visible over the blue veins of her milk-white breast. So were floating by the days of her nineteenth summer among the hills. The evenings she spent by the side of her

grey-headed father—and the old man was blest. Her nights past in a world of gentle dreams.

But though Amy Gordon knew not yet what it was to love, she was herself the object of as deep, true, tender, and passionate love, as ever swelled and kindled within a human breast. Her own cousin, Walter Harden, now lived and would have died for her; but had not hitherto ventured to tell his passion. He was a few years older than her, and had long loved her with the gentle purity of a brother's affection. Amy had no brother of her own, and always called Walter Harden by that endearing name. That very name of brother had probably so familiarized her heart towards him, that never had she thought of him, even for a single moment, in any other light. But although he too called Amy sister, his heart burned with other feelings, and he must win her to be his bride, and possess her as his wife, or die. When she was a mere child he had led her by the hand—when a fair girl he had in his arms lifted her across the swollen burns, and over the snow-drifts—now that she was a woman he had looked on her in silence, but with a soul overcharged with a thousand thoughts, hopes, and desires, which he feared to speak of to her ear, for he knew, and saw, and felt, in sorrow, that she loved him but as a brother. He knew, however, that she loved none else; and in that—and that alone—was his hope,—so he at last determined to woo the Lily of Liddesdale,

and win her, in her beauty and fragrance, to bloom within his house.

The Lily was sitting alone in a deep hollow among the hills, with her sheep and lambs pasturing or playing around her, while over that little secluded circle a single hawk was hanging far up in the sky. She was glad, but not surprised, to see her brother standing beside her; and when he sat down by her side and took her hand into his, she looked upon him with a gentle smile, and asked if he was going upon business farther on among the hills. Walter Harden instantly poured forth, in a torrent, the passion of his soul, beseeched her not to shut up her sweet bosom against him, but to promise to become, before summer was over, his wedded wife. He spoke with fervour but trepidation—kissed her cheek—and then awaited, with a fast throbbing and palpitating heart, his Amy's reply.

There was no guile—no art—no hypocrisy, in the pure and happy heart of the Lily of Liddesdale. She took not away her hand from that of him who pressed it—she rose not up from the turf, although her gentle side just touched his heart—she turned not away her face so beautiful—nor changed the silvery sweetness of her speech. Walter Harden was such a man, as in a war of freemen defending their mountains against a tyrant, would have advanced his plume in every scene of danger, and have been chosen a leader among his pastoral compeers. Amy turned her large beaming

hazel eyes upon his face, and saw that it was overshadowed. There was something in its expression too sad and solemn, mingling with the flush of hope and passion, to suffer her, with playful or careless words, to turn away from herself the meaning of what she had heard. Her lover saw in her kind, but unagitated silence, that to him she was but a sister; and rising to go, he said, "Blessed be thou all the days of thy life —farewell—my sweet Amy—farewell."

But they did not thus part. They walked together on the lonely hill-side—down the banks of the little wimpling burn,—and then out of one small glen into another, and their talk was affectionate and kind. Amy heard him speak of feelings to her unknown, and almost wondered that she could be so dear to him, so necessary to his life, as he passionately vowed. Nor could such vows be unpleasant to her ear, uttered by that manly voice, and enforced by the silent speech of those bold but gentle eyes. She concealed nothing from him, but frankly confessed, that hitherto she had looked upon him even as her own father's son. "Let us be happy, Walter, as we have been so long. I cannot marry you—oh—no—no—but since you say it would kill you if I married another, then I swear to you by all that is sacred,—yes, by the Bible on which we have often read together, and by yonder sun setting over the Windhead, that you never will see that day." Walter Harden was satisfied; he spoke of love and marriage no more; and on the sweet,

fresh, airless, and dewy quiet of Evening, they walked together down into the inhabited vale, and parted, almost like brother and sister, as they had been used to do for so many happy years.

Soon after this, Amy was sent by her father to the Priory, the ancient seat of the Elliots, with some wicker baskets which they had made for the young ladies there. A small plantation of willows was in the corner of the meadow in which their cottage stood, and from them the old shepherd and his daughter formed many little articles of such elegance and ingenuity, that they did not seem out of place even in the splendid rooms of the Priory. Amy had slung some of these pieces of rural workmanship round her waist, while some were hanging on her arms, and thus she was gliding along a footpath through the old elm-woods that shelter the Priory, when she met young George Elliot, the heir of that ancient family, going out with his angle to the river side. The youth, who had but a short time before returned from England, where he had been for several years, knew at the first glance that the fair creature before him could be no other than the Lily of Liddesdale. With the utmost gentleness and benignity he called her by that name, and after a few words of courtesy, he smilingly asked her for one small flower basket to keep for her sake. He unloosened one from her graceful waist, and with that liberty which superior rank justified, but, at the same time, with that tender-

ness which an amiable mind prompted, he kissed her fair forehead, and they parted—she to the Priory, and he down to the Linn at the Cushat-wood.

Never had the Boy beheld a creature so perfectly beautiful. The silence and the songs of morning were upon the dewy woods, when that vision rose before him—his soul was full of the joy of youth—and when Amy disappeared, he wondered how he could have parted so soon—in a few moments—from that bright and beaming Dryad. Smiles had been in her eyes and round her pearly teeth while they spoke together, and he remembered the soft and fragrant lock of hair that touched his lips as he gently kissed her forehead. The beauty of that living creature sank into his soul along with all the sweet influences of nature now rejoicing in the full, ripe, rich spirit of Summer, and in fancy he saw that Lily springing up in every glade through which he was now roaming, and when he had reached the Linn, on the bank too of every romantic nook and bay where the clear waters eddied or slept. "She must recross the bridge on her way home," said the enamoured Boy to himself, and fearing that Amy Gordon might already be returning from the Priory, he clambered up the face of the shrubby precipice; and, bounding over the large green mossy stones, and through the entangling briars and brushwood, he soon was at the Bridge, and sat down on a high bank, under a cliff, commanding a view of the path by which the fair maiden must approach on her homeward journey.

The heart of the innocent Amy had fluttered, too, as the tall, slim, graceful stripling had kissed her brow. No rudeness—no insult—no pride—no haughty freedom had been in his demeanour towards her; but she felt gladly conscious in her mind, that he had been delighted with her looks, and would, perhaps, think now and then afterwards, as he walked through the woods, of the shepherd's daughter, with whom he had not disdained to speak. Amy thought, while she half looked back, as he disappeared among the trees, that he was just such a youth as the old minstrels sang of in their war or love ballads,—and that he was well worthy some rich and noble bride, whom he might bring to his Hall on a snow-white palfrey with silken reins, and silver bells on its mane. And she began to recite to herself, as she walked along, one of those old Border tales.

Amy left her baskets at the Priory, and was near the Bridge, on her return, when she beheld the young Heir spring down from the bank before her, and come forward with a sparkling countenance. "I must have that sweet tress that hangs over thy sweeter forehead," said he, with a low and eager voice, "and I will keep it for the sake of the fairest Flower that ever bloomed in my father's woods—even the Lily of Liddesdale." The lock was given—for how could it be refused? And the shepherdess saw the young and high-born Heir of the Priory put it into his breast. She proceeded across the hill—down the long Falcon-

Glen—and through the Witch-wood—and still he was by her side. There was a charm in his speech—and in every word he said—and in his gentle demeanour—that touched poor Amy's very heart; and, as he gave her assistance, although all unneeded, over the uneven hollows, and the springs and marshes, she had neither the courage, nor the wish, nor the power, to request him to turn back to the Priory. They entered a small quiet green circlet, bare of trees, in the bosom of a coppice-wood; and, the youth taking her hand, made her sit down on the mossy trunk of a fallen yew, and said: "Amy—my fair Amy—before we part—will you sing me one of your old Border songs? and let it be one of love. Did not the sons of Nobles, long ago, often love the daughters of them that dwelt in huts?"

Amy Gordon sat there an hour with the loving, but honourable Boy, and sang many a plaintive tune, and recited many a romantic story. She believed every word she uttered, whether of human lovers, or of the affection of fairies, the silent creatures of the woods and knowes, towards our race. For herself, she felt a constant wild delight in fictions, which to her were all as truths; and she was glad and proud to see how they held, in silent attention, him at whose request she recited or sang. But now she sprang to her feet, and beseeching him to forgive the freedom she had used in thus venturing to speak so long in such a presence, but, at the same time, remembering that a lock of her hair was near his heart, and perceiving

that the little basket she had let him take was half filled with wild flowers, the Lily of Liddesdale made a graceful obeisance, and disappeared. Nor did the youth follow her—they had sat together for one delightful hour—and he returned by himself to the Priory.

From this day the trouble of a new delight was in the heart of young Elliot. The spirit of innocence was blended with that of beauty all over Amy, the Shepherdess; and it was their perfect union that the noble boy so dearly loved. Yet what could she be to him more than a gleam of rainbow light—a phantom of the woods—an imagination that past away into the silence of the far-off green pastoral hills? She belonged almost to another world—another life. His dwelling, and that of his forefathers, was a princely Hall. She, and all her nameless line, were dwellers in turf-built huts. "In other times," thought he, "I might have transplanted that Lily into mine own garden; but these are foolish fancies! Am I in love with poor Amy Gordon, the daughter of a Shepherd?" As these thoughts were passing through his mind, he was bounding along a ridge of hills, from which many a sweet vale was visible; and he formed a sudden determination to visit the Cottage of Amy's father, which he had seen some years ago pointed out when he was with a gay party of Lords and Ladies, on a visit to the ruins of Hermitage-Castle. He bounded like a deer along; and as he

descended into a little vale, lo! on a green mound, the Lily of Liddesdale herding her sheep!

Amy was half terrified to see him standing in his graceful beauty before her in that solitary place. In a moment her soul was disquieted within her, and she felt that it indeed was love. She wished that she might sink into that verdant mound, from which she vainly strove to rise, as the impassioned youth lay down on the turf at her side, and telling her to fear nothing, called her by a thousand tender and endearing names. Never, till he had seen Amy, had he felt one tremor of love; but now his heart was kindled, and in that utter solitude, where all was so quiet and so peaceful, there seemed to him a preternatural charm over all her character. He burst out into passionate vows and prayers, and called God to witness, that if she would love him, he would forget all distinction of rank, and marry his beautiful Amy, and she should live yet in his own Hall. The words were uttered, and there was silence. Their echo sounded for a moment strange to his own ears; but he fixed his soul upon her countenance, and repeated them over and over again with wilder emphasis, and more impassioned utterance. Amy was confounded with fear and perplexity; but when she saw him kneeling before her, the meek, innocent, humble girl, could not endure the sight, and said, " Sir, behold in me one willing to be your servant. Yes, willing is poor Amy Gordon to kiss your feet. I am a poor

man's daughter.—Oh! Sir, you surely came not hither for evil? No—no—evil dwells not in such a shape. Away then—away then—my noble master—for if Walter Harden were to see you!—if my old Father knew this, his heart would break!"

Once more they parted. Amy returned home in the evening at the usual hour; but there was no peace now for her soul. Such intense and passionate love had been vowed to her—such winning and delightful expressions whispered into her heart by one so far above her in all things, but who felt no degradation in equalling her to him in the warmth and depth of his affection, that she sometimes strove to think it all but one of her wild dreams awakened by some verse or incident in some old ballad. But she had felt his kisses on her cheek—his thrilling voice was in her soul—and she was oppressed with a passion, pure, it is true, and most innocently humble, but a passion that seemed to be like life itself, never to be overcome, and that could cease only when the heart he had deluded—for what else than delusion could it be—ceased to beat. Thus agitated, she had directed her way homewards with hurried and heedless steps. She minded not the miry pits—the quivering marshes—and the wet rushy moors. Instead of crossing the little sinuous moorland streams at their narrow places, where her light feet used to bound across them, she waded through them in her feverish anxiety, and sometimes, after hurrying along the braes, she sat suddenly down, breath-

less, weak, and exhausted, and retraced in weeping bewilderment all the scene of fear, joy, endearments, caresses, and wild persuasions, from which she had torn herself away, and escaped. On reaching home, she went to her bed trembling and shivering, and drowned in tears—and could scarcely dare, much as she needed comfort, even to say her prayers.—Amy was in a high fever—during the night she became delirious—and her old Father sat by her bedside till morning, fearing that he was going to lose his child.

There was grief over the great Strath and all its glens, when the rumour spread over them that Amy Gordon was dying. Her wonderful beauty had but given a tenderer and brighter character to the love which her unsullied innocence and simple goodness had universally inspired; and it was felt, even among the sobbings of a natural affection, that if the Lily of Liddesdale should die, something would be taken away of which they all were proud, and from whose lustre there was a diffusion over their own lives. Many a gentle hand touched the closed door of her cottage, and many a low voice inquired how God was dealing with her—but where now was Walter Harden when his Lily was like to fade? He was at her bed's foot, as her Father was at its head. Was she not his sister, although she would not be his bride? And when he beheld her glazed eyes wandering unconsciously in delirium, and felt her blood throbbing so rapidly in her beautiful transparent veins, he prayed to God that

Amy might recover, even although her heart were never to be his, even although it were to fly to the bosom of him whose name she constantly kept repeating in her wandering phantasies. For Amy, although she sometimes kindly whispered the name of Walter Harden, and asked why her brother came not to see her on her death-bed, yet far oftener spake beseechingly and passionately as if to that other Youth, and implored him to break not the heart of a poor simple Shepherdess who was willing to kiss his feet.

Neither the Father of poor Amy nor Walter Harden had known before that she had ever seen young George Elliot—but they soon understood, from the innocent distraction of her speech, that the noble Boy had left pure the Lily he loved, and Walter said, that it belonged not to that line ever to injure the helpless. Many a pang it gave him, no doubt, to think that his Amy's heart, which all his life-long tenderness could not win, had yielded itself up in tumultuous joy to one —two—three meetings of an hour, or perhaps only a few minutes, with one removed so high and so far from her humble life and all its concerns. These were cold sickening pangs of humiliation and jealousy, that might, in a less generous nature, have crushed all love. But it was not so with him; and cheerfully would Walter Harden have taken that burning fever into his own veins, so that it could have been removed from her's—cheerfully would he have laid down his own manly head on that pillow, so that Amy could have lifted up her long

raven tresses, now often miserably dishevelled in her ravings, and braiding them once more, walk out well and happy into the sunshine of the beautiful day, rendered more beautiful still by her presence. Hard would it have been to have resigned her bosom to any human touch; but hideous seemed it beyond all thought to resign it to the touch of death. Let Heaven but avert that doom, and his affectionate soul felt that it could be satisfied.

Out of a long deep trance-like sleep Amy at last awoke, and her eyes fell upon the face of Walter Harden. She regarded long and earnestly its pitying and solemn expression, then prest her hand to her forehead and wept. "Is my father dead and buried—and did he die of grief and shame for his Amy? Oh! that needed not have been, for I am innocent. Neither Walter, have I broken, nor will I ever break my promise unto thee. I remember it well—by the Bible—and yon setting sun. But, I am weak and faint—Oh! tell me, Walter! all that has happened! Have I been ill—for hours—or for days—or weeks—or months? For that I know not,—so wild and so strange, so sad and so sorrowful, so miserable and so wretched, have been my many thousand dreams!"

There was no concealment and no disguise. Amy was kindly and tenderly told by her father and her brother all that she had uttered, as far as they understood it, during her illness. Nor had the innocent creature anything more to tell. Her soul was after the

fever calm, quiet, and happy. The form, voice, and shape of that beautiful Youth were to her little more now than the words and the sights of a dream. Sickness and decay had brought her spirit back to all the humble and tranquil thoughts and feelings of her lowly life. In the woods, and among the hills, that bright and noble being had for a time touched her senses, her heart, her soul, and her imagination. All was new, strange, stirring, overwhelming, irresistible, and paradise to her spirit. But it was gone—and might it stay away for ever, so she prayed, as her kind brother lifted up her head with his gentle hand, and laid it down as gently on the pillow he had smoothed. "Walter! I will be your wife! for thee my affection is calm and deep, —but that other—Oh! that was only a passing dream!" Walter leaned over her and kissed her pale lips. "Yes! Walter," she continued, "I once promised to marry none other—but now I promise to marry thee —if indeed God will forgive me for such words, lying as I am perhaps on my death-bed. I utter them to make you happy. If I live, life will be dear to me only for thy sake—if I die, walk thou along with my father at the coffin's head, and lay thine Amy in the mould. I am the Lily of Liddesdale,—you know that was once the vain creature's name!—and white, pale, and withered enough indeed is, I trow, the poor Lily now!"

Walter Harden heard her affectionate words with a deep delight, but he determined in his soul not to

bind Amy down to these promises, sacred and fervent as they were, if, on her complete recovery, he discovered that they originated in gratitude, and not in love. From pure and disinterested devotion of spirit did he watch the progress of her recovery, nor did he ever allude to young Elliot but in terms of respect and admiration. Amy had expressed her surprise that he had never come to inquire how she was during her illness, and added, with a sigh, "Love at first sight cannot be thought to last long. Yet surely he would have wept to hear that I was dead." Walter then told her that he had been hurried away to France, the very day after she had seen him, to attend the death-bed of his Father, and had not yet returned to Scotland—but that the Ladies of the Priory had sent a messenger to know how she was every day, and that to their kindness was owing many of the conveniences she had enjoyed. Poor Amy was glad to hear that she had no reason to think the noble boy would have neglected her in her illness; and she could not but look with pride upon her lover, who was not afraid to vindicate the character of one who she had confessed had been but too dear to her only a few weeks ago. This generosity and manly confidence on the part of her cousin quite won and subdued her heart, and Walter Harden never approached her now without awakening in her bosom something of that delightful agitation and troubled joy which her simple heart had first suffered in the presence of her young noble

lover. Amy was in love with Walter almost as much as he was with her, and the names of brother and sister, pleasant as they had ever been, were now laid aside.

Amy Gordon rose from her sick-bed, and even as the flower whose name she bore, did she again lift up her drooping head beneath the dews and the sunshine. Again did she go to the hill-side, and sit and sing beside her flock. But Walter Harden was oftener with her than before, and ere the harvest moon should hang her mild, clear, unhaloed orb over the late reapers on the upland grain-fields, had Amy promised that she would become his wife. She saw him now in his own natural light—the best, the most intelligent, the most industrious, and the handsomest shepherd over all the hills; and when it was known that there was to be a marriage between Walter Harden and Amy Gordon, none felt surprised, although some, sighing, said, it was seldom, indeed, that fortune so allowed those to wed whom nature had united.

The Lily of Liddesdale was now bright and beautiful as ever, and was returning homewards by herself from the far-off hills during one rich golden sunset, when, in a dark hollow, she heard the sound of horses' feet, and in an instant young George Elliot was at her side. Amy's dream was over—and she looked on the beautiful youth with an unquaking heart. "I have been far away—Amy—across the seas. My Father—you may have heard of it, was ill—and I attend-

ed his bed. I loved him, Amy,—I loved my Father —but he is dead;" and here the noble youth's tears fell fast—" Nothing now, but the world's laugh, prevents me making you my wife—yes—my wife—sweetest Lily—and what care I for the world? for thou art both earth and heaven to me."

The impetuous, ardent, and impassioned Boy scarcely looked in Amy's face—he remembered her confusion, her fear, her sighs, her tears, his half-permitted kisses, his faintly repelled embraces, and all his suffered endearments of brow, lip, and cheek, in that solitary dell; so with a powerful arm he lifted her upon another steed, which, till now, she had scarcely observed—other horsemen seemed to the frightened, and speechless, and motionless maiden to be near—and away they went over the smooth turf like the wind, till her eyes were blind with the rapid flight, and her head dizzy. She heard kind words whispering in her ear; but Amy, since that fever, had never been so strong as before, and her high-blooded palfrey was now carrying her fleetly away over hill and hollow in a swoon.

At last she seemed to be falling down from a height, but softly, as if borne on the wings of the air; and as her feet touched the ground, she knew that young Elliot had taken her from that fleet courser, and looking up, she saw that she was in a wood of old shadowy trees of gigantic size, perfectly still, and far away from all known dwellings both on hill and plain. But a cottage was before her, and she and young Elliot were on the

green in its front. It was thickly covered with honeysuckle, and moss-roses that hung their beautiful full-blown shining lamps high as the thatched roof—and Amy's soul sickened at the still, secluded, lovely, and lonely sight. "This shall be our bridal abode," whispered her lover into her ear with panting breath. "Fear me not—distrust me not—I am not base—but my love to thee is tender and true. Soon shall we be married—aye—this very evening must thou be mine—and may the hand that now clasps thy sweet waist wither, and the tongue that wooes thee be palsied, if ever I cease to love thee as my Amy—my Lily—my wedded wife!"

The wearied and half-fainting maiden could as yet make no reply. The dream that she had believed was gone for ever now brightened upon her in the intense light of reality, and it was in her power to become the wife of him for whom she had, in the innocence and simplicity of her nature, once felt a consuming passion that had brought her to the brink of the grave. His warm breath was on her bosom—words charged with bewitching persuasion went thrilling through her heart-strings—and if she had any pride, (and what human heart has it not,) it might well mingle now with love, and impel her into the embrace that was now open to clasp her close to a burning heart.

A stately and beautiful lady came smiling from the cottage door, and Amy knew that it was the sister of Elliot, and kneeled down before her. Last time

the shepherdess had seen that lady it was when, with a fearful step, she took her baskets into the hall, and blushing scarcely lifted up her eyes, when she and her high-born sisters deigned to commend her workmanship, and whisper into each other that the Lily of Liddesdale deserved her name. "Amy," said she, with a gentle voice as she took her hand, "Amy Gordon! —my brother loves you—and he has won me to acknowledge you as my sister. I can deny my brother nothing—and his grief has brought low the pride—perhaps the foolish pride, of my heart. Will you marry him, Amy? Will you, the daughter of a poor shepherd, marry the young heir of the Priory, and the descendant, Amy, of a noble race? Amy—I see that thou art beautiful—I know that thou art good—may God and my mother forgive me this, but my sister must thou be—behold my brother is at his shepherdess's feet!"

Amy Gordon had now nothing to fear. That sweet, young, pure, noble Lady was her friend—and she felt persuaded now that in good truth young Elliot wished to make her his wife. Might she indeed live the Lady of the Priory—be a sister to these beautiful creatures—dwell among those ancient woods—and all those spacious lawns and richest gardens—and might she be, not in a dream, but in living reality, the wife, of him on whose bosom her heart had died with joy in that lonely dell, and love him and yield him her love even unto the very hour till she was dead? Such changes of estate had been long ago,

and sung of in many a ballad; and was she to be the one maiden of millions, the one born in hundreds of years, to whom this blessed lot was to befall? But these thoughts passed on and away like sun rays upon a stream; the cloud, not a dark one, of reality returned over her. She thought of Walter Harden, and in an instant her soul was fixed; nor from that instant could it be shaken by terror or by love, by the countenance of death, or the countenance, far more powerful than of death, that of the Youth before her, pale and flushed alternately with the fluctuations of many passions.

Amy felt in her soul the collected voice, as it were, of many happy and humble years among her hills, and that told her not to forsake her own natural life. The Flower that lived happily and beautifully in its own secluded nook by the side of the lonely tarn, or torrent, might lose much both of its fragrance and its lustre, when transplanted into a richer soil and more sheltered bed. Could she forget for ever her father's ingle—the earthen floor—its simple furniture of day and night? Could she forget all the familiar places round about the Hut where she was born? And if she left them all, and was taken up even in the arms of love into another sphere of life, would not that be the same, or worse than to forget them, and would it not be sacrilege to the holiness of the many Sabbath nights on which she had sat at her widowed father's knees? Yet might such thoughts have been destroyed in her beating heart by the whispered music of young

Elliot's eloquent and impassioned voice. But Walter Harden, though ignorant of her present jeopardy, seemed to stand before her, and she remembered his face when he sat beside her dying bed, his prayers over her when he thought she slept, and their oaths of fidelity mutually sworn before the great God.

"Will you, my noble and honoured Master, suffer me, all unworthy as I am to be yours, to leave your bosom. Sir, I am too miserable about you, to pretend to feel any offence, because you will not let me go. I might well be proud of your love, since, indeed, it happens so that you do love me; but let me kneel down at your beautiful sister's feet, for to her I may be able to speak—to you I feel that it may not be, for humble am I, although unfortunately I have found favour in your eyes."

The agitated youth released Amy from his arms, and she flung herself down upon her knees before that lovely Lady.

"Lady! hear me speak—a simple uneducated girl of the hills, and tell me if you would wish to hear me break an oath sworn upon the Bible, and so to lose my immortal soul? So have I sworn to be the wife of Walter Harden—the wife of a poor Shepherd; and, Lady, may I be on the left hand of God at the great judgment-day, if ever I be forsworn. I love Walter Harden. Do you counsel me to break his kind, faithful heart? O Sir, my noble young Master, how dare a creature such as I to speak so freely to your beauti-

ful sister? how dare I keep my eyes open when you are at your servant's feet? Oh! Sir—had I been born a lady, I would have lived—died for you—gone with you all over the world—all over the sea, and all the islands of the sea. I would have sighed, wept, and pined away, till I had won your love—for your love would have been a blessed thing—that do I well know from the few moments you stooped to let your heart beat against the bosom of a low-born shepherdess. Even now—dearly as I love Walter Harden—fain would I lay me down and die upon this daisied green, and be buried beneath it, rather than that poor Amy Gordon should affect the soul of her young master thus; for never saw I, and never can I again see, a youth so beautiful, so winning, so overwhelming to a maiden's heart, as he before whom I now implore permission to grovel in the dust. Send me away—spurn me from you—let me crawl away out of your presence—I can find my way back to my Father's house."

It might have been a trying thing to the pride of this high-minded and high-born youth, to be refused in marriage by the daughter of one of his poorest Shepherds; so would it have been had he loved less; but all pride was extinguished, and so seemed for ever and ever the light of this world's happiness. To plead farther, he felt was in vain. Her soul had been given to another, and the seal of an oath set upon it, never to be broken, but by the hand of death. So he lift-

ed her up in his arms, kissed her madly a hundred times, cheek, brow, neck, and bosom, and then rushed into the woods. Amy followed him with her streaming eyes, and then turned again towards the beautiful Lady who was sobbing audibly for her brother's sake.

"Oh! weep not lady! that I, poor Amy Gordon, have refused to become the wife of your noble brother. The time will come, and soon too, when he and you and your fair sisters and your stately mother, will all be thankful that I yielded not to entreaties that would then have brought disgrace upon your house! Never—never would your mother have forgiven you—and as for me, would not she have wished me dead and buried rather than the bride of her only and darling son? You know that, simple and innocent as I am, I now speak but the truth, and how, then, could your noble brother have continued to love me, who had brought dishonour, and disagreement, and distraction, among those who are now all so dear to one another? O yes—yes—he would soon have hated poor Amy Gordon, and, without any blame, perhaps, broken my heart, or sent me away from the Priory back to my Father's hut. Blessed be God, that all this evil has not been wrought by me! all—all—will soon be as before."

She to whom Amy thus fervently spoke felt that her words were not wholly without truth. Nor could she help admiring the noble, heroic, and virtuous conduct of this poor shepherdess, whom all this world's

temptations would have failed to lure from the right path. Before this meeting she had thought of Amy as far her inferior indeed, and it was long before her proper pride had yielded to thé love of her brother, whose passion she feared might otherwise had led to some horrible catastrophe. Now that he had fled from them in distraction, this terror again possessed her,—and she whispered it to the pale trembling shepherdess. "Follow him—follow him—gentle lady, into the wood—lose not a moment—call upon him by name—and that sweet voice must bring him back. But fear not—he is too good to do evil—fear not—receive my blessing—and let me return to my father's hut—it is but a few miles, and that distance is nothing to one who has lived all her life among the hills. My poor father will think I have died in some solitary place."

The Lady wept to think that she, whom she had been willing to receive as a sister, should return all by herself so many miles at night to a lonely hut. But her soul was sick with fear for her brother—so she took from her shoulders a long rich Indian silk scarf of gorgeous colours, and throwing it over Amy's figure, said, "Fair creature and good, keep this for my sake—and now farewell." She gazed on the Lily for a moment in delighted wonder at her graceful beauty, as she bent on one knee, enrobed in that unwonted garb, and then rising up, gathered the flowing drapery around her, and disappeared.

"God in his infinite mercy be praised," cried Wal-

ter Harden, as he and the Old Man, who had been seeking Amy for hours all over the hills, saw the Lily gliding towards them up a little narrow dell, covered from head to foot with the splendid raiment that shone in a soft shower of moonlight. Joy and astonishment for a while held them speechless--but they soon knew all that had happened; and Walter Harden lifted her up in his arms and carried her home, exhausted now and faint with fatigue and trepidation, as if she were but a lamb rescued from a snow-wreath.

Next moon was that which the reapers love—and before it had waned Amy slept in the bosom of her husband, Walter Harden. Years past on—and other flowers besides the Lily of Liddesdale, were blooming in his house. One summer evening, when the shepherd, his fair wife, and their children, were sitting together on the green before the door, enjoying probably the sight and the noise of the imps much more than the murmurs of the sylvan Liddel, which perhaps they did not hear, a gay cavalcade rode up to the cottage, and a noble-looking young man dismounting from his horse, and gently assisting a beautiful lady to do the same, walked up to her whom he had known only by a name now almost forgotten—and with a beaming smile said, "Fair Lily of Liddesdale--this is my wife, the Lady of the Priory—come—it is hard to say which of you should bear off the bell." Amy rose from her seat with an air graceful as ever, but something more matronly than that of Elliot's younger bride—and

while these two fair creatures beheld each other with mutual admiration, their husbands stood there equally happy, and equally proud—George Elliot of the Priory —and Walter Harden of the Glenfoot.

MOSS-SIDE.

Gilbert Ainslie was a poor man; and he had been a poor man all the days of his life, which were not few, for his thin hair was now waxing grey. He had been born and bred on the small moorland farm which he now occupied; and he hoped to die there, as his father and grandfather had done before him, leaving a family just above the more bitter wants of this world. Labour, hard and unremitting, had been his lot in life; but although sometimes severely tried, he had never repined; and through all the mist and gloom, and even the storms that had assailed him, he had lived on from year to year in that calm and resigned contentment which unconsciously cheers the hearthstone of the blameless poor. With his own hands he had ploughed, sowed, and reaped his often scanty harvest, assisted, as they grew up, by three sons, who, even in boyhood, were happy to work along with their father in the fields. Out of doors or in, Gilbert Ainslie was never idle. The spade, the shears, the plough-shaft, the sickle, and the flail, all came readily to hands that grasped them well; and not a morsel of food was eaten under his roof, or a garment worn there, that was not

honestly, severely, nobly earned. Gilbert Ainslie was a slave, but it was for them he loved with a sober and deep affection. The thraldom under which he lived God had imposed, and it only served to give his character a shade of silent gravity, but not austere; to make his smiles fewer, but more heartfelt; to calm his soul at grace before and after meals; and to kindle it in morning and evening prayer.

There is no need to tell the character of the wife of such a man. Meek and thoughtful, yet gladsome and gay withal, her heaven was in her house; and her gentler and weaker hands helped to bar the door against want. Of ten children that had been born to them, they had lost three; and as they had fed, clothed, and educated them respectably, so did they give them who died a respectable funeral. The living did not grudge to give up, for a while, some of their daily comforts, for the sake of the dead; and bought, with the little sums which their industry had saved, decent mournings, worn on Sabbath, and then carefully laid by. Of the seven that survived, two sons were farm-servants in the neighbourhood, while three daughters and two sons remained at home, growing, or grown up, a small, happy, hard-working household.

Many cottages are there in Scotland like Moss-side, and many such humble and virtuous cottagers as were now beneath its roof of straw. The eye of the passing traveller may mark them, or mark them not, but they stand peacefully in thousands over all the land; and

most beautiful do they make it, through all its wide valleys and narrow glens,—its low holms encircled by the rocky walls of some bonny burn,—its green mounts elated with their little crowning groves of plane-trees, —its yellow cornfields,—its bare pastoral hillsides, and all its heathy moors, on whose black bosom lie shining or concealed glades of excessive verdure, inhabited by flowers, and visited only by the far-flying bees. Moss-side was not beautiful to a careless or hasty eye; but when looked on and surveyed, it seemed a pleasant dwelling. Its roof, overgrown with grass and moss, was almost as green as the ground out of which its weather-stained walls appeared to grow. The moss behind it was separated from a little garden, by a narrow slip of arable land, the dark colour of which showed that it had been won from the wild by patient industry, and by patient industry retained. It required a bright sunny day to make Moss-side fair; but then it was fair indeed; and when the little brown moorland birds were singing their short songs among the rushes and the heather, or a lark, perhaps lured thither by some green barley field for its undisturbed nest, rose ringing all over the enlivened solitude, the little bleak farm smiled like the paradise of poverty, sad and affecting in its lone and extreme simplicity. The boys and girls had made some plots of flowers among the vegetables that the little garden supplied for their homely meals; pinks and carnations, brought from walled gardens of rich men farther down in the cultivated strath,

grew here with somewhat diminished lustre; a bright show of tulips had a strange beauty in the midst of that moor-land; and the smell of roses mixed well with that of the clover, the beautiful fair clover that loves the soil and the air of Scotland, and gives the rich and balmy milk to the poor man's lips.

In this cottage, Gilbert's youngest child, a girl about nine years of age, had been lying for a week in a fever. It was now Saturday evening, and the ninth day of the disease. Was she to live or die? It seemed as if a very few hours were between the innocent creature and Heaven. All the symptoms were those of approaching death. The parents knew well the change that comes over the human face, whether it be in infancy, youth, or prime, just before the departure of the spirit; and as they stood together by Margaret's bed, it seemed to them that the fatal shadow had fallen upon her features. The surgeon of the parish lived some miles distant, but they expected him now every moment, and many a wistful look was directed by tearful eyes along the moor. The daughter, who was out at service, came anxiously home on this night, the only one that could be allowed her, for the poor must work in their grief, and their servants must do their duty to those whose bread they eat, even when nature is sick,—sick at heart. Another of the daughters came in from the potatoe-field beyond the brae, with what was to be their frugal supper. The calm noiseless spirit of life was in and around the house, while death seemed

dealing with one who, a few days ago, was like light upon the floor, and the sound of music, that always breathed up when most wanted; glad and joyous in common talk,—sweet, silvery, and mournful, when it joined in hymn or psalm. One after the other, they all continued going up to the bed-side, and then coming away sobbing or silent, to see their merry little sister, who used to keep dancing all day like a butterfly in a meadow-field, or like a butterfly with shut wings on a flower, trifling for a while in the silence of her joy, now tossing restlessly on her bed, and scarcely sensible to the words of endearment whispered around her, or the kisses dropt with tears, in spite of themselves, on her burning forehead.

Utter poverty often kills the affections; but a deep, constant, and common feeling of this world's hardships, and an equal participation in all those struggles by which they may be softened, unite husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, in thoughtful and subdued tenderness, making them happy indeed while the circle round the fire is unbroken, and yet preparing them every day to bear the separation, when some one or other is taken slowly or suddenly away. Their souls are not moved by fits and starts, although, indeed, nature sometimes will wrestle with necessity; and there is a wise moderation both in the joy and the grief of the intelligent poor, which keeps lasting trouble away from their earthly lot, and prepares them silently and unconsciously for Heaven.

"Do you think the child is dying?" said Gilbert with a calm voice to the surgeon, who, on his wearied horse, had just arrived from another sick-bed, over the misty range of hills; and had been looking stedfastly for some minutes on the little patient. The humane man knew the family well, in the midst of whom he was standing, and replied, "While there is life there is hope; but my pretty little Margaret is, I fear, in the last extremity." There was no loud lamentation at these words—all had before known, though they would not confess it to themselves, what they now were told—and though the certainty that was in the words of the skilful man made their hearts beat for a little with sicker throbbings, made their pale faces paler, and brought out from some eyes a greater gush of tears, yet death had been before in this house, and in this case he came, as he always does, in awe, but not in terror. There were wandering and wavering and dreamy delirious phantasies in the brain of the innocent child; but the few words she indistinctly uttered were affecting, not rending to the heart, for it was plain, that she thought herself herding her sheep in the green silent pastures, and sitting wrapped in her plaid upon the lown and sunny side of the Birk-knowe. She was too much exhausted—there was too little life—too little breath in her heart, to frame a tune; but some of her words seemed to be from favourite old songs; and at last her mother wept, and turned aside her face, when the child, whose

blue eyes were shut, and her lips almost still, breathed out these lines of the beautiful twenty-third psalm:

> The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want.
>   He makes me down to lie
> In pastures green: he leadeth me
>   The quiet waters by.

The child was now left with none but her mother by the bed-side, for it was said to be best so; and Gilbert and his family sat down round the kitchen fire, for a while in silence. In about a quarter of an hour, they began to rise calmly, and to go each to his allotted work. One of the daughters went forth with the pail to milk the cow, and another began to set out the table in the middle of the floor for supper, covering it with a white cloth. Gilbert viewed the usual household arrangements with a solemn and untroubled eye; and there was almost the faint light of a grateful smile on his cheek, as he said to the worthy surgeon, "You will partake of our fare after your day's travel and toil of humanity." In a short silent half hour, the potatoes and oat-cakes, butter and milk, were on the board; and Gilbert, lifting up his toil-hardened, but manly hand, with a slow motion, at which the room was as hushed as if it had been empty, closed his eyes in reverence, and asked a blessing. There was a little stool, on which no one sat, by the old man's side. It had been put there unwittingly, when the other seats were all placed in their usual order;

but the golden head that was wont to rise at that part of the table was now wanting. There was silence—not a word was said—their meal was before them,—God had been thanked, and they began to eat.

While they were at their silent meal a horseman came galloping to the door, and, with a loud voice, called out that he had been sent express with a letter to Gilbert Ainslie; at the same time rudely, and with an oath, demanding a dram for his trouble. The eldest son, a lad of eighteen, fiercely seized the bridle of his horse, and turned its head away from the door. The rider, somewhat alarmed at the flushed face of the powerful stripling, threw down the letter and rode off. Gilbert took the letter from his son's hand, casting, at the same time, a half upbraiding look on his face, that was returning to its former colour. "I feared,"—said the youth, with a tear in his eye,—"I feared that the brute's voice, and the trampling of the horse's feet, would have disturbed her." Gilbert held the letter hesitatingly in his hand, as if afraid, at that moment, to read it; at length, he said aloud to the surgeon: "You know that I am a poor man, and debt, if justly incurred, and punctually paid when due, is no dishonour." Both his hand and his voice shook slightly as he spoke; but he opened the letter from the lawyer, and read it in silence. At this moment his wife came from her child's bed-side, and looking anxiously at her husband, told him "not to mind about the money, that no man, who knew him, would

arrest his goods, or put him into prison. Though, dear me, it is cruel to be put to it thus, when our bairn is dying, and when, if so it be the Lord's will, she should have a decent burial, poor innocent, like them that went before her." Gilbert continued reading the letter with a face on which no emotion could be discovered; and then, folding it up, he gave it to his wife, told her she might read it if she chose, and then put it into his desk in the room, beside the poor dear bairn. She took it from him, without reading it, and crushed it into her bosom; for she turned her ear towards her child, and, thinking she heard it stir, ran out hastily to its bed-side.

Another hour of trial past, and the child was still swimming for its life. The very dogs knew there was grief in the house, and lay without stirring, as if hiding themselves, below the long table at the window. One sister sat with an unfinished gown on her knees, that she had been sewing for the dear child, and still continued at the hopeless work, she scarcely knew why; and often, often, putting up her hand to wipe away a tear. "What is that?" said the old man to his eldest daughter: "What is that you are laying on the shelf?" She could scarcely reply that it was a ribband and an ivory comb that she had brought for little Margaret, against the night of the dancing-school ball. And, at these words, the father could not restrain a long, deep, and bitter groan; at which the boy, nearest in age to his dying sister, looked up

weeping in his face, and letting the tattered book of old ballads, which he had been poring on, but not reading, fall out of his hands, he rose from his seat, and, going into his father's bosom, kissed him, and asked God to bless him; for the holy heart of the boy was moved within him; and the old man, as he embraced him, felt that, in his innocence and simplicity, he was indeed a comforter. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away," said the old man; blessed be the name of the Lord."

The outer-door gently opened, and he, whose presence had in former years brought peace and resignation hither, when their hearts had been tried, even as they now were tried, stood before them. On the night before the Sabbath, the minister of Auchindown never left his Manse, except, as now, to visit the sick or dying bed. Scarcely could Gilbert reply to his first question about his child, when the surgeon came from the bed-room, and said, "Margaret seems lifted up by God's hand above death and the grave: I think she will recover. She has fallen asleep; and, when she wakes, I hope—I believe—that the danger will be past, and that your child will live."

They were all prepared for death; but now they were found unprepared for life. One wept that had till then locked up all her tears within her heart; another gave a short palpitating shriek; and the tender-hearted Isobel, who had nursed the child when it was a baby, fainted away. The youngest brother

gave way to gladsome smiles; and, calling out his dog Hector, who used to sport with him and his little sister on the moor, he told the tidings to the dumb irrational creature, whose eyes, it is certain, sparkled with a sort of joy. The clock, for some days, had been prevented from striking the hours; but the silent fingers pointed to the hour of nine; and that, in the cottage of Gilbert Ainslie, was the stated hour of family worship. His own honoured minister took the book;

> He waled a portion with judicious care:
> And Let us worship God, he said, with solemn air.

A chapter was read—a prayer said;—and so, too, was sung a psalm; but it was sung low, and with suppressed voices, lest the child's saving sleep might be broken; and now and then the female voices trembled, or some one of them ceased altogether; for there had been tribulation and anguish, and now hope and faith were tried in the joy of thanksgiving.

The child still slept; and its sleep seemed more sound and deep. It appeared almost certain that the crisis was over, and that the flower was not to fade. "Children," said Gilbert, "our happiness is in the love we bear to one another; and our duty is in submitting to and serving God. Gracious, indeed, has he been unto us. Is not the recovery of our little darling, dancing, singing Margaret, worth all the gold that ever was mined? If we had had thousands of thousands, would we not have filled up her grave

with the worthless dross of gold, rather than that she should have gone down there with her sweet face and all her rosy smiles?" There was no reply; but a joyful sobbing all over the room.

"Never mind the letter, nor the debt, father," said the eldest daughter. "We have all some little thing of our own—a few pounds—and we shall be able to raise as much as will keep arrest and prison at a distance. Or if they do take our furniture out of the house, all except Margaret's bed, who cares? We will sleep on the floor; and there are potatoes in the field, and clear water in the spring. We need fear nothing, want nothing; blessed be God for all his mercies."

Gilbert went into the sick-room, and got the letter from his wife, who was sitting at the head of the bed, watching, with a heart blessed beyond all bliss, the calm and regular breathings of her child. "This letter," said he mildly, "is not from a hard creditor. Come with me while I read it aloud to our children." The letter was read aloud, and it was well fitted to diffuse pleasure and satisfaction through the dwelling of poverty. It was from an executor to the will of a distant relative, who had left Gilbert Ainslie L. 1500. "The sum," said Gilbert, "is a large one to folks like us, but not, I hope, large enough to turn our heads, or make us think ourselves all lords and ladies. It will do more, far more, than put me fairly above the world at last. I believe, that, with it, I may buy this very farm, on which my forefathers have toiled. But God, whose

Providence has sent this temporal blessing, may he send us wisdom and prudence how to use it, and humble and grateful hearts to us all."

"You will be able to send me to school all the year round now, father," said the youngest boy. "And you may leave the flail to your sons now, father," said the eldest. You may hold the plough still, for you draw a straighter furrow than any of us; but hard work for young sinews; and you may sit now oftener in your arm-chair by the ingle. You will not need to rise now in the dark, cold, and snowy winter mornings, and keep threshing corn in the barn for hours by candle-light, before the late dawning."

There was silence, gladness, and sorrow, and but little sleep in Moss-side, between the rising and the setting of the stars, that were now out in thousands, clear, bright, and sparkling over the unclouded sky. Those who had lain down for an hour or two in bed could scarcely be said to have slept; and when about morning little Margaret awoke, an altered creature, pale, languid, and unable to turn herself on her lowly bed, but with meaning in her eyes, memory in her mind, affection in her heart, and coolness in all her veins, a happy groupe were watching the first faint smile that broke over her features; and never did one who stood there forget that Sabbath morning, on which she seemed to look round upon them all with a gaze of fair and sweet bewilderment, like one half conscious of having been rescued from the power of the grave.

AN HOUR IN THE MANSE.



In a few weeks the annual Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was to be administered in the parish of Deanside; and the minister, venerable in old age, of authority by the power of his talents and learning, almost feared for his sanctity, yet withal beloved for gentleness and compassion that had never been found wanting when required either by the misfortunes or errors of any of his flock, had delivered for several successive Sabbaths, to full congregations, sermons on the proper preparation of communicants in that awful ordinance. The old man was a follower of Calvin; and many, who had listened to him with a resolution in their hearts to approach the table of the Redeemer, felt so awe-stricken and awakened at the conclusion of his exhortations, that they gave their souls another year to meditate on what they had heard, and by a pure and humble course of life, to render themselves less unworthy to partake the mysterious and holy bread and wine.

The good old man received in the Manse, for a couple

of hours every evening, such of his parishioners as came to signify their wish to partake of the sacrament; and it was then noted, that though he in nowise departed, in his conversation with them at such times, from the spirit of those doctrines which he had delivered from the pulpit, yet his manner was milder, and more soothing, and full of encouragement; so that many who went to him almost with quaking hearts, departed in tranquillity and peace, and looked forward to that most impressive and solemn act of the Christian faith, with calm and glad anticipation. The old man thought truly and justly, that few, if any, would come to the manse, after having heard him in the kirk, without due and deep reflection; and, therefore, though he allowed none to pass through his hands without strict examination, he spoke to them all benignly, and with that sort of paternal pity, which a religious man, about to leave this life, feels towards all his brethren of mankind, who are entering upon, or engaged in its scenes of agitation, trouble, and danger.

On one of those evenings, the servant showed into the minister's study a tall, bold-looking, dark-visaged man, in the prime of life, who, with little of the usual courtesy, advanced into the middle of the room, and somewhat abruptly declared the sacred purpose of his visit. But before he could receive a reply, he looked around and before him; and there was something so solemn in the old minister's appearance, as he sat like a spirit, with his unclouded eyes fixed upon the intruder,

that that person's countenance fell, and his heart was involuntarily knocking against his side. An old large Bible, the same that he read from in the pulpit, was lying open before him. One glimmering candle showed his beautiful and silvery locks falling over his temples, as his head half stooped over the sacred page; a dead silence was in the room, dedicated to meditation and prayer; the old man, it was known, had for some time felt himself to be dying, and had spoken of the sacrament of this summer as the last he could ever hope to administer; so that altogether, in the silence, the dimness, the sanctity, the unworldliness of the time, the place, and the being before him, the visitor stood like one abashed and appalled; and bowing more reverently, or, at least, respectfully, he said, with a hurried and quivering voice, "Sir, I come for your sanction to be admitted to the table of our Lord."

The minister motioned to him with his hand to sit down, and it was a relief to the trembling man to do so, for he was in the presence of one who he felt saw into his heart. A sudden change, from hardihood to terror, took place within his dark nature; he wished himself out of the insupportable sanctity of that breathless room; and a remorse, that had hitherto slept, or been drowned within him, now clutched his heartstrings, as if with an alternate grasp of frost and fire, and made his knees knock against each other where he sat, and his face pale as ashes.

"Norman Adams, saidst thou, that thou wilt take into that hand, and put into those lips, the symbol of the blood that was shed for sinners, and of the body that bowed on the cross, and then gave up the ghost? If so, let us speak together, even as if thou wert communing with thine own heart. Never, again, may I join in that Sacrament, for the hour of my departure is at hand. Say, wilt thou eat and drink death to thine immortal soul?"

The terrified man found strength to rise from his seat, and staggering towards the door, said, "Pardon, forgive me, I am not worthy." "It is not I who can pardon, Norman. That power lies not with man; but sit down—you are deadly pale—and though, I fear, an ill-living and a dissolute man, greater sinners have repented, and been saved. Approach not now the table of the Lord, but confess all your sins before him in the silence of your own house, and upon your naked knees on the stone-floor every morning and every night; and if this you do faithfully, humbly, and with a contrite heart, come to me again when the Sacrament is over, and I will speak words of comfort to you, if, then, I am able to speak, if, Norman, it should be on my death-bed. This will I do for the sake of thy soul, and for the sake of thy father, Norman, whom my soul loved, and who was a support to me in my ministry for many long long years, even for two score and ten, for we were at school together; and had your father been living now, he would, like

myself, have this very day finished his eighty-fifth year. I send you not from me in anger. but in pity, and love. Go, my son, and this very night begin your repentance, for if that face speak the truth, your heart must be sorely charged."

Just as the old man ceased speaking, and before the humble, or at least affrighted culprit had risen to go, another visitor of a very different kind was shown into the room. A young beautiful girl, almost shrowded in her cloak, with a sweet pale face, on which sadness seemed in vain to strive with the natural expression of the happiness of youth.

"Mary Simpson," said the kind old man, as she stood with a timid curtesy near the door; "Mary Simpson, approach, and receive from my hands the token for which thou comest. Well, dost thou know the history of thy Saviour's life and rejoicest in the life and immortality brought to light by the gospel. Young and guileless, Mary, art thou, and dim as my memory now is of many things, yet do I well remember the evening, when first beside my knee, thou heardst read how the Divine Infant was laid in a manger,—how the wise men from the east came to the place of his Nativity,—and how the angels were heard singing in the fields of Bethlehem all the night long."

Alas! every word that had thus been uttered sent a pang into the poor creature's heart, and without lifting her eyes from the floor, and in a voice more faint and hollow than belonged to one so young, she said, "Oh!

Sir, I come not as an intending Communicant; yet the Lord my God knows that I am rather miserable than guilty, and he will not suffer my soul to perish, though a baby is now within me, the child of guilt, and sin, and horror. This, my shame, come I to tell you; but for the father of my babe unborn, cruel though he has been to me, Oh! cruel, cruel, indeed,—yet shall his name go down with me in silence to the grave. I must not, must not breathe his name in mortal ears; but I have looked round me in the wide moor, and when nothing that could understand was by, nothing living but birds, and bees, and the sheep I was herding, often have I whispered his name in my prayers, and beseeched God, and Jesus, to forgive him all his sins."

At these words, of which the passionate utterance seemed to relieve her heart, and before the pitying and bewildered old man could reply, Mary Simpson raised her eyes from the floor, and fearing to meet the face of the minister, which had heretofore never shone upon her but with smiles, and of which the expected frown was to her altogether insupportable, she turned them wildly round the room, as if for a dark resting-place, and beheld Norman Adams rooted to his seat, leaning towards her with his white ghastly countenance, and his eyes starting from their sockets, seemingly in wrath, agony, fear, and remorse. That terrible face struck poor Mary to the heart, and she sunk against the wall, and slipped down, shuddering upon a chair.

" Norman Adams, I am old and weak, but do you

put your arm round that poor lost creature, and keep her from falling down on the hard floor. I hear it is a stormy night, and she has walked some miles hither; no wonder she is overcome. You have heard her confession. But it was not meant for your ear; so, till I see you again, say nothing of what you have now heard."

"O Sir! a cup of water, for my blood is either leaving my heart altogether, or it is drowning it. Your voice, Sir, is going far, far away from me, and I am sinking down. Oh! hold me,—hold me up! Is it a pit into which I am falling?—Saw I not Norman Adams?—Where is he now?"

The poor maiden did not fall off the chair, although Norman Adams supported her not; but her head lay back against the wall, and a sigh, long and dismal, burst from her bosom that deeply affected the old man's heart, but struck that of the speechless and motionless sinner, like the first toll of the prison bell that warns the felon to leave his cell and come forth to execution.

The minister fixed a stern eye upon Norman, for, from the poor girl's unconscious words, it was plain that he was the guilty wretch who had wrought all this misery. "You knew, did you not, that she had neither father nor mother, sister nor brother, scarcely one relation on earth to care for or watch over her; and yet you have used her so? If her beauty was a temptation unto you, did not the sweet child's inno-

cence touch your hard and selfish heart with pity; or her guilt and grief must surely now wring it with remorse. Look on her—white—cold—breathless—still as a corpse; and yet, thou bold bad man, thy footsteps would have approached the Table of thy Lord."

The child now partly awoke from her swoon, and her dim opening eyes met those of Norman Adams. She shut them with a shudder, and said, sickly and with a quivering voice, "O spare, spare me, Norman: Are we again in that dark fearful wood? Tremble not for your life on earth, Norman, for never, never will I tell to mortal ears that terrible secret; but spare me, spare me, else our Saviour, with all his mercy, will never pardon your unrelenting soul. These are cruel-looking eyes; you will not surely murder poor Mary Simpson, unhappy as she is, and must for ever be—yet life is sweet! She beseeches you on her knees to spare her life!"—and, in the intense fear of phantasy, the poor creature struggled off the chair, and fell down indeed in a heap at his feet.

"Canst thou indeed be the son of old Norman Adams, the industrious, the temperate, the mild, and the pious? who so often sat in this very room which your presence has now polluted, and spake with me on the mysteries of life and of death. Foul ravisher, what stayed thy hand from the murder of that child, when there were none near to hear her shrieks in the dark solitude of the great pine-wood?"

Norman Adams smote his heart and fell down too

on his knees beside the poor ruined orphan. He put his arm round her, and, raising her from the floor, said, " No, no, my sin is great, too great for heaven's forgiveness; but, O Sir, say not,—say not that I would have murdered her; for, savage as my crime was, yet may God judge me less terribly than if I had taken her life."

In a little while they were both seated with some composure, and silence was in the room. No one spoke, and the old grey haired man sat with eyes fixed, without reading, on the open Bible. At last he broke silence with these words out of Isaiah, that seemed to have forced themselves on his heedless eyes. " Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

Mary Simpson wept aloud at these words; and seemed to forget her own wrongs and grief in commiseration of the agonies of remorse and fear that were now plainly preying on the soul of the guilty man. " I forgive you Norman, and will soon be out of the way, no longer to anger you with the sight of me." Then fixing her streaming eyes on the minister, she besought him not to be the means of bringing him to punishment, and a shameful death, for that he might repent, and live to be a good man and respected in the parish; but that she was a poor orphan for whom few cared, and who, when dead, would have but a small funeral.

"I will deliver myself up into the hands of justice," said the offender, "for I do not deserve to live. Mine was an inhuman crime, and let a violent and shameful death be my doom."

The orphan girl now stood up as if her strength had been restored, and stretching out her hands passionately, with a flow of most affecting and beautiful language, inspired by a meek, single, and sinless heart, that could not bear the thought of utter degradation and wretchedness befalling any one of the rational children of God, implored and beseeched the old man to comfort the sinner before them, and promise that the dark transaction of guilt should never leave the concealment of their own three hearts. "Did he not save the lives of two brothers once who were drowning in that black mossy loch, when their own kindred, at work among the hay, feared the deep sullen water, and all stood aloof shuddering and shrieking, till Norman Adams leapt in to their rescue, and drew them by the dripping hair to the shore, and then lay down beside them on the heather, as like to death as themselves? I myself saw it done; I myself heard their mother call down the blessing of God on Norman's head, and then all the haymakers knelt down and prayed. When you, on the Sabbath, returned thanks to God for that they were saved, Oh! kind Sir, did you not name, in the full kirk, him who, under Providence, did deliver them from death, and who, you said, had thus showed himself to be a Christian indeed? May his sin against

me be forgotten, for the sake of those two drowning boys, and their mother who blesses his name unto this day."

From a few questions solemnly asked, and solemnly answered, the minister found that Norman Adams had been won by the beauty and loveliness of this poor orphan shepherdess, as he had sometimes spoken to her when sitting on the hillside with her flock, but that pride had prevented him from ever thinking of her in marriage. It appeared that he had also been falsely informed, by a youth whom Mary disliked for his brutal and gross manners, that she was not the innocent girl that her seeming simplicity denoted. On returning from a festive meeting, where this abject person had made many mean insinuations against her virtue, Norman Adams met her returning to her master's house, in the dusk of the evening, on the foot-path leading through a lonely wood; and, though his crime was of the deepest dye, it seemed to the minister of the religion of mercy, that by repentance, and belief in the atonement that had once been made for sinners, he, too, might perhaps hope for forgiveness at the throne of God.

"I warned you, miserable man, of the fatal nature of sin, when first it brought a trouble over your countenance, and broke in upon the peaceful integrity of your life. Was not the silence of the night often terrible to you, when you were alone in the moors, and the whisper of your own conscience told you, that every wicked thought was sacrilege to your father's

dust? Step by step, and almost imperceptibly, perhaps, did you advance upon the road that leadeth to destruction; but look back now, and what a long dark journey have you taken, standing, as you are, on the brink of everlasting death. Once you were kind, gentle, generous, manly, and free, but you trusted to the deceitfulness of your own heart; you estranged yourself from the house of the God of your fathers, and what has your nature done for you at last, but sunk you into a wretch, savage, selfish, cruel, cowardly, and in good truth a slave? A felon are you, and forfeited to the hangman's hands. Look on that poor innocent child, and think what is man without God. What would you give now, if the last three years of your reckless life had been past in a dungeon dug deep into the earth, with hunger and thirst gnawing at your heart, and bent down under a cart-load of chains? Yet look not so ghastly, for I condemn you not utterly; nor, though I know your guilt, can I know what good may yet be left uncorrupted and unextinguished in your soul. Kneel not to me, Norman; fasten not so your eyes upon me; lift them upwards, and then turn them in upon your own heart, for the dreadful reckoning is between it and God."

Mary Simpson had now recovered all her strength, and she knelt down by the side of the groaner. Deep was the pity she now felt for him, who to her had shown no pity; she did not refuse to lay her light arm tenderly upon his neck. Often had she prayed to God to save his soul, even among her rueful sobs of shame

in the solitary glens; and now that she beheld his sin punished with a remorse more than he could bear, the orphan would have willingly died, to avert from his prostrate head the wrath of the Almighty.

The old man wept at the sight of so much innocence, and so much guilt, kneeling together before God, in strange union and fellowship of a common being. With his own fatherly arms he lifted up the orphan from her knees, and said, "Mary Simpson, my sweet and innocent Mary Simpson, for innocent thou art, the elders will give thee a token, that will, on Sabbath-day, admit thee (not for the first time, though so young) to the communion-table. Fear not to approach it; look at me, and on my face, when I bless the elements, and be thou strong in the strength of the Lord. Norman Adams, return to your home. Go into the chamber where your father died. Let your knees wear out the part of the floor on which he kneeled. It is somewhat worn already; you have seen the mark of your father's knees. Who knows, but that pardon and peace may descend from Heaven even upon such a sinner as thou. On none such as thou have mine eyes ever looked, in knowledge, among all those who have lived and died under my care, for three generations. But great is the unknown guilt that may be hidden even in the church-yard of a small quiet parish like this! Dost thou feel as if God-forsaken? Or, Oh! say it unto me, canst thou, my poor son, dare to hope for repentance?"

The pitiful tone of the old man's trembling voice, and the motion of his shaking and withered hands, as he lifted them up almost in an attitude of benediction, completed the prostration of that sinner's spirit. All his better nature, which had too long been oppressed under scorn of holy ordinances, and the coldness of infidelity, and the selfishness of lawless desires that insensibly harden the heart they do not dissolve, now struggled to rise up and respect its rights. "When I remember what I once was, I can hope—when I think what I now am, I only, only fear."

A storm of rain and wind had come on, and Mary Simpson slept in the manse that night. On the ensuing Sabbath she partook of the Sacrament. A woful illness fell upon Norman Adams; and then for a long time no one saw him, or knew where he had gone. It was said that he was in a distant city, and that he was a miserable creature, that never again could look upon the sun. But it was otherwise ordered. He returned to his farm, greatly changed in face and person, but even yet more changed in spirit.

The old minister had more days allotted to him than he had thought, and was not taken away for some summers. Before he died, he had reason to know that Norman Adams had repented in tears of blood, in thoughts of faith, and in deeds of charity; and he did not fear to admit him, too, in good time, to the holy ordinance, along with Mary Simpson, then his wife, and the mother of his children.

THE HEAD-STONE.

THE coffin was let down to the bottom of the grave, the planks were removed from the heaped-up brink, the first rattling clods had struck their knell, the quick shovelling was over, and the long, broad, skilfully cut pieces of turf were aptly joined together, and trimly laid by the beating spade, so that the newest mound in the church-yard was scarcely distinguishable from those that were grown over by the undisturbed grass and daisies of a luxuriant spring. The burial was soon over; and the party, with one consenting motion, having uncovered their heads in decent reverence of the place and occasion, were beginning to separate, and about to leave the church-yard. Here, some acquaintances, from distant parts of the parish, who had not had an opportunity of addressing each other in the house that had belonged to the deceased, nor in course of the few hundred yards that the little procession had to move over from his bed to his grave, were shaking hands quietly but cheerfully, and inquiring after the welfare

of each other's families. There, a small knot of neighbours were speaking, without exaggeration, of the respectable character which the deceased had borne, and mentioning to one another little incidents of his life, some of them so remote as to be known only to the grey-headed persons of the groupe. While a few yards farther removed from the spot, were standing together parties who discussed ordinary concerns, altogether unconnected with the funeral, such as the state of the markets, the promise of the season, or change of tenants; but still with a sobriety of manner and voice, that was insensibly produced by the influence of the simple ceremony now closed, by the quiet graves around, and the shadow of the spire and grey walls of the house of God.

Two men yet stood together at the head of the grave, with countenances of sincere but unimpassioned grief. They were Brothers, the only sons of him who had been buried. And there was something in their situation that naturally kept the eyes of many directed upon them, for a longer time, and more intently, than would have been the case, had there been nothing more observable about them than the common symptoms of a common sorrow. But these two Brothers, who were now standing at the head of their father's grave, had for some years been totally estranged from each other, and the only words that had passed between them, during all that time, had been uttered

within a few days past, during the necessary preparations for the old man's funeral.

No deep and deadly quarrel was between these Brothers, and neither of them could distinctly tell the cause of this unnatural estrangement. Perhaps dim jealousies of their father's favour—selfish thoughts that will sometimes force themselves into poor men's hearts, respecting temporal expectations—unaccommodating manners on both sides—taunting words that mean little when uttered, but which rankle and fester in remembrance—imagined opposition of interests, that, duly considered, would have been found one and the same—these, and many other causes, slight when single, but strong when rising up together in one baneful band, had gradually but fatally infected their hearts, till at last they who in youth had been seldom separate, and truly attached, now met at market, and, miserable to say, at church, with dark and averted faces, like different clansmen during a feud.

Surely if any thing could have softened their hearts towards each other, it must have been to stand silently, side by side, while the earth, stones, and clods, were falling down upon their father's coffin. And doubtless their hearts were so softened. But pride, though it cannot prevent the holy affections of nature from being felt, may prevent them from being shown; and these two Brothers stood there together, determined not to let each other know the mutual tenderness that, in spite of them, was gushing up in their hearts, and

teaching them the unconfessed folly and wickedness of their causeless quarrel.

A Head-stone had been prepared, and a person came forward to plant it. The elder Brother directed him how to place it—a plain stone, with a sand-glass, skull, and cross-bones, chiselled not rudely, and a few words inscribed. The younger Brother regarded the operation with a troubled eye, and said, loudly enough to be heard by several of the bystanders, "William, this was not kind in you;—you should have told me of this. I loved my father as well as you could love him. You were the elder, and, it may be, the favourite son; but I had a right in nature to have joined you in ordering this Head-stone, had I not?"

During these words, the stone was sinking into the earth, and many persons who were on their way from the grave returned. For a while the elder Brother said nothing, for he had a consciousness in his heart that he ought to have consulted his father's son in designing this last becoming mark of affection and respect to his memory, so the stone was planted in silence, and now stood erect, decently and simply among the other unostentatious memorials of the humble dead.

The inscription merely gave the name and age of the deceased, and told that the stone had been erected "by his affectionate sons." The sight of these words seemed to soften the displeasure of the angry man, and he said, somewhat more mildly, "Yes, we

were his affectionate sons, and since my name is on the stone, I am satisfied, Brother. We have not drawn together kindly of late years, and perhaps never may; but I acknowledge and respect your worth; and here, before our own friends, and before the friends of our father, with my foot above his head, I express my willingness to be on better and other terms with you, and if we cannot command love in our hearts, let us, at least, Brother, bar out all unkindness."

The minister, who had attended the funeral, and had something intrusted to him to say publicly before he left the church-yard, now came forward, and asked the elder Brother, why he spake not regarding this matter. He saw that there was something of a cold and sullen pride rising up in his heart, for not easily may any man hope to dismiss from the chamber of his heart even the vilest guest, if once cherished there. With a solemn and almost severe air, he looked upon the relenting man, and then, changing his countenance into serenity, said gently,

Behold how good a thing it is,
And how becoming well,
Together such as brethren are
In unity to dwell.

The time, the place, and this beautiful expression of a natural sentiment, quite overcame a heart, in which many kind, if not warm, affections dwelt; and the man thus appealed to bowed down his head and

wept. "Give me your hand, Brother;" and it was given, while a murmur of satisfaction arose from all present, and all hearts felt kindlier and more humanely towards each other.

As the Brothers stood fervently, but composedly, grasping each other's hands, in the little hollow that lay between the grave of their mother, long since dead, and of their father, whose shroud was haply not yet still from the fall of dust to dust, the minister stood beside them with a pleasant countenance, and said, "I must fulfil the promise I made to your father on his death-bed. I must read to you a few words which his hand wrote at an hour when his tongue denied its office. I must not say that you did your duty to your old father; for did he not often beseech you, apart from one another, to be reconciled, for your own sakes as Christians, for his sake, and for the sake of the mother who bare you, and Stephen, who died that you might be born? When the palsy struck him for the last time, you were both absent, nor was it your fault that you were not beside the old man when he died. As long as sense continued with him here, did he think of you two, and of you two alone. Tears were in his eyes; I saw them there, and on his cheek too, when no breath came from his lips. But of this no more. He died with this paper in his hand; and he made me know that I was to read it to you over his grave. I now obey him.

"My sons, if you will let my bones lie quiet in the

grave, near the dust of your mother, depart not from my burial till, in the name of God and Christ, you promise to love one another as you used to do. Dear boys, receive my blessing."

Some turned their heads away to hide the tears that needed not to be hidden,—and when the Brothers had released each other from a long and sobbing embrace, many went up to them, and, in a single word or two, expressed their joy at this perfect reconcilement. The Brothers themselves walked away from the church-yard, arm in arm with the Minister to the Manse. On the following Sabbath, they were seen sitting with their families in the same pew, and it was observed, that they read together off the same Bible when the minister gave out the text, and that they sang together, taking hold of the same psalm-book. The same psalm was sung, (given out at their own request,) of which one verse had been repeated at their father's grave; a larger sum than usual was on that Sabbath found in the plate for the poor, for Love and Charity are sisters. And ever after, both during the peace and the troubles of this life, the hearts of the Brothers were as one, and in nothing were they divided.

SUNSET AND SUNRISE.



"This is the Evening on which, a few days ago, we agreed to walk to the Bower at the Waterfall, and look at the perfection of a Scottish Sunset. Every thing on earth and heaven seems at this hour as beautiful as our souls could desire. Come then, my sweet Anna, come along, for, by the time we have reached the Bower, with your gentle steps, the great bright orb will be nearly resting its rim on what you call the Ruby Mountain. Come along, and we can return before the dew has softened a single ringlet on your fair forehead." With these words, the happy husband locked kindly within his own the arm of his young English wife; and even in the solitude of his unfrequented groves, where no eye but his own now beheld her, looked with pride on the gracefulnesss and beauty, that seemed so congenial with the singleness and simplicity of her soul.

They reached the Bower just as the western heaven was in all its glory. To them while they stood together gazing on that glow of fire that burns without consuming, and in whose mighty furnace the clouds and

the mountain-tops are but as embers, there seemed to exist no sky but that region of it in which their spirits were entranced. Their eyes saw it,—their souls felt it; but what their eyes saw or their souls felt they knew not in the mystery of that magnificence. The vast black bars,—the piled up masses of burnished gold,—the beds of softest saffron and richest purple, lying surrounded with continually fluctuating dyes of crimson, till the very sun himself was for moments unheeded in the gorgeousness his light had created,—the show of storm but the feeling of calm over all that tumultuous yet settled world of cloud that had come floating silently and majestically together, and yet, in one little hour was to be no more;—what might not beings endowed with a sense of beauty, and greatness, and love, and fear, and terror, and eternity, feel when drawing their breath together, and turning their stedfast eyes on each other's faces, in such a scene as this?

But from these high and bewildering imaginations, their souls returned insensibly to the real world in which their life lay; and still feeling the presence of that splendid Sunset, although now they looked not towards it, they let their eyes glide, in mere human happiness, over the surface of the inhabited earth. The green fields that, in all varieties of form, lay stretching out before them, the hedge-rows of hawthorn and sweet-briar, the humble coppices, the stately groves, and, in the distance, the dark pine forest loading the mountain

side, were all their own,—and so too were a hundred cottages, on height or hollow, shelterless or buried in shelter, and all alike dear to their humble inmates, on account of their cheerfulness or their repose. God had given to them this bright and beautiful portion of the earth, and he had given them along with it hearts and souls to feel and understand in what lay the worth of the gift, and to enjoy it with a deep and thoughtful gratitude.

"All hearts bless you, Anna; and do you know that the Shepherd Poet, whom we once visited in his Shealing, has composed a Gaelic song on our marriage, and it is now sung by many a pretty Highland girl, both in cottage and on hillside. They wondered, it is said, why I should have brought them an English lady; but that was before they saw your face, or heard how sweet may be an English voice even to a Highland ear. They love you, Anna; they would die for you, Anna, for they have seen you with your sweet body in silk and satin, with a jewel on your forehead, and pearls in your hair, moving to music in your husband's hereditary hall; and they have seen you too in russet garb, and ringlets unadorned, in their own smoky cottages, blyth and free as some native shepherdess of the hills. To the joyful and the sorrowful art thou alike dear; and all my tenantry are rejoiced when you appear, whether on your palfrey on the heather, or walking through the hay or harvest field, or sitting by the bed of sickness; or welcoming, with a gentle

stateliness, the old withered mountaineer to his chieftain's gate."

The tears fell from the lady's eyes at these kind, loving, and joyful words; and, with a sob, she leaned her cheek on her husband's bosom. "Oh! why—why should I be sad in the midst of the undeserved goodness of God? Since the farthest back time I recollect in the darkness of infancy, I have been perfectly happy. I have never lost any dear friend, as so many others have done. My father and mother live, and love me well; blessings be upon them now, and for ever! You love me, and that so tenderly, that at times my heart is like to break. But my husband—forgive me—pity me—but upbraid me not, when I tell you, that my soul, of late, has often fainted within me, as now it does,—for oh! husband! husband!—the fear of death is upon me; and as the sun sank behind the mountain, I thought that moment of a large burial-place, and the vault in which I am to be interred."

These words gave a shock to her husband's heart, and, for a few moments, he knew not how to cheer and comfort her. Almost before he could speak, and while he was silently kissing her forehead, his young wife, somewhat more composedly said, "I strive against it—I close my eyes to contain—to crush the tears that I feel gushing up from my stricken heart; but they force their way through, and my face is often ruefully drenched in solitude. Well may I weep to

leave this world—thee—my parents—the rooms in which, for a year of perfect bliss, I have walked, sat, or slept in thy bosom—all these beautiful woods, and plains, and hills, which I have begun to feel every day more and more as belonging unto me, because I am thy wife. But, husband! beyond far far beyond them all, except him of whose blood it is, do I weep to leave our baby that is now unborn. May it live to comfort you—to gladden your eyes when I am gone —yea, to bring tears sometimes into them, when its face or form may chance to remember you of the mother who bore it, and died that it might see the day."

The Lady rose up with these words from her husband's bosom; and, as a sweet balmy whispering breath of wind came from the broom on the river's bank, and fanned her cheeks, she seemed to revive from that desponding dream; and, with a faint smile, looked all round the sylvan Bower. The cheerful hum of the bees, that seemed to be hastening their work among the honey-flowers before the fall of dark, —the noise of the river that had been unheard while the sun was setting,—the lowing of the kine going leisurely homewards before their infant drivers,—and the loud lofty song of the blackbird in his grove,—these, and a thousand other mingling influences of nature, touched her heart with joy,—and her eyes became altogether free from tears. Her husband, who had been deeply affected by words so new to him from her lips, seized these moments of returning peace to divert her

thoughts entirely from such causeless terrors. "To this Bower I brought you, to show you what a Scottish landscape was, the day after our marriage,—and, from that hour to this, every look, smile, word, and deed of thine, has been after my own heart, except these foolish tears. But the dew will soon be on the grass,—so come, my beloved,—nay, I will not stir unless you smile. There, Anna! you are your beautiful self again!" And they returned cheerful and laughing to the hall; the lady's face being again as bright as if a tear had never dimmed its beauty. The glory of the sunset was almost forgotten in the sweet, fair, pensive silence of the twilight, now fast glimmering on to one of those clear summer nights which divide, for a few hours, one day from another with their transitory pomp of stars.

Before midnight, all who slept awoke. It was hoped that an heir was about to be born to that ancient house; and there is something in the dim and solemn reverence which invests an unbroken line of ancestry, that blends easily with those deeper and more awful feelings with which the birth of a human creature, in all circumstances, is naturally regarded. Tenderly beloved by all as this young and beautiful Lady was, who coming a stranger among them, and as they felt from another land, had inspired them insensibly with a sort of pity mingling with their pride in her loveliness and virtue, it may well be thought that now the house was agitated, and that its agitation was soon

spread from cottage to cottage to a great distance round. Many a prayer, therefore, was said for her; and God was beseeched soon to make her, in his mercy, a joyful mother. No fears, it was said, were entertained for the lady's life; but, after some hours of intolerable anguish of suspense, her husband, telling an old servant whither he had gone, walked out into the open air, and, in a few minutes, sat down on a tombstone, without knowing that he had entered the little church-yard, which, with the parish church, was within a few fields and groves of the house. He looked around him; and nothing but graves—graves—graves. "This stone was erected, by her husband, in memory of Agnes Ilford, an Englishwoman, who died in child-bed, aged nineteen." This inscription was every letter of it distinctly legible in the moonlight; and he held his eyes fixed upon it—reading it over and over with a shudder; and then rising up, and hurrying out of the church-yard, he looked back from the gate, and thought he saw a female figure all in white with an infant in her arms, gliding noiselessly over the graves and tombstones. But he looked more stedfastly—and it was nothing. He knew it was nothing; but he was terrified; and turned his face away from the church-yard. The old servant advanced towards him and he feared to look him in the face, lest he should know that his wife was a corpse.

"Life or death?" at length he found power to utter "My honoured lady lives, but her son breathed only a

few gasps—no heir, no heir. I was sent to tell you to come quickly to my lady's chamber."

In a moment the old man was alone, for, recovering from the torpidity of fear, his master had flown off like an arrow, and now with soft footsteps was stealing along the corridor towards the door of his wife's apartment. But as he stood within a few steps of it, composing his countenance and strengthening his heart, to behold his beloved Anna lying exhausted, and too probably ill, ill indeed,—his own mother, like a shadow, came out of the room, and not knowing that she was seen, clasped her hands together upon her breast, and lifting up her eyes with an expression of despair, exclaimed, as in a petition to God, "Oh! my poor son!—my poor son! what will become of him!" She looked forward, and there was her son before her, with a face like ashes, tottering and speechless. She embraced and supported him—the old and feeble supported the young and the strong. "I am blind, and must feel my way; but help me to the bed-side that I may sit down and kiss my dead wife. I ought to have been there, surely, when she died."

The Lady was dying, but not dead. It was thought that she was insensible, but when her husband said, "Anna—Anna!" she fixed her hitherto unnoticing eyes upon his face, and moved her lips as if speaking, but no words were heard. He stooped down and kissed her forehead, and then there was a smile over all her face, and one word, "Farewell!" At that faint and

loving voice he touched her lips with his, and he must then have felt her parting breath; for when he again looked on her face, the smile upon it was more deep, placid, stedfast, than any living smile, and a mortal silence was on her bosom that was to move no more.

They sat together, he and his mother, looking on the young, fair, and beautiful dead. Sometimes he was distracted, and paced the room raving, and with a black and gloomy aspect. Then he sat down perfectly composed, and looked alternately on the countenance of his young wife, bright, blooming, and smiling in death; and on that of his old mother, pale, withered, and solemn in life. As yet he had no distinct thoughts of himself. Overwhelming pity for one so young, so good, so beautiful, and so happy, taken suddenly away, possessed his disconsolate soul; and he would have wept with joy to see her restored to life, even although he were to live with her no more, though she were utterly to forget him; for what would that be to him, so that she were but alive! He felt that he could have borne to be separated from her by seas, or by a dungeon's walls; for in the strength of his love he would have been happy, knowing that she was a living being beneath Heaven's sunshine. But in a few days is she to be buried!—And then was he forced to think upon himself, and his utter desolation, changed in a few hours from a too perfect happiness, into a wretch whose existence was an anguish and a curse.

At last he could not sustain the sweet, sad, beautiful sight of that which was now lying stretched upon his marriage-bed; and he found himself passing along the silent passages, with faint and distant lamentations meeting his ear, but scarcely recognised by his mind, until he felt the fresh air, and saw the grey dawn of morning. Slowly and unconsciously he passed on into the woods, and walked on and on, without aim or object, through the solitude of awakening nature. He heard or heeded not the wide ringing songs of all the happy birds; he saw not the wild flowers beneath his feet, nor the dew diamonds that glittered on every leaf of the motionless trees. The ruins of a lonely hut on the hillside were close to him, and he sat down in stupefaction, as if he had been an exile in some foreign country. He lifted up his eyes, and the Sun was rising, so that all the eastern heaven was tinged with the beautifulness of joy. The turrets of his own ancestral Mansion were visible among the dark umbrage of its ancient grove; fair were the lawns and fields that stretched away from it towards the orient light, and one bright bend of the river kindled up the dim scenery through which it rolled. His own family Estate was before his eyes, and as the thought rose within his heart, "all that I see is mine," yet felt he that the poorest beggar was richer far than he, and that in one night he had lost all that was worth possessing. He saw the Church Tower, and thought upon the place of graves. "There will she be buried,—there will she

be buried,' he repeated with a low voice, while a groan of mortal misery startled the little moss-wren from a crevice in the ruin. He rose up, and the thought of suicide entered into his sick heart. He gazed on the river, and murmuring aloud in his hopeless wretchedness, said, " Why should I not sink into a pool and be drowned? But oh! Anna, thou who wert so meek and pure on earth, and who art now bright and glorious in heaven, what would thy sainted and angelic spirit feel if I were to appear thus lost and wicked at the judgment-seat?"

A low voice reached his ear, and, looking round, he beheld his old, faithful, white-headed servant on his knees,—him who had been his father's foster-brother, and who, in the privilege of age and fidelity and love to all belonging to that House, had followed him unregarded,—had watched him as he wrung his hands, and had been praying for him to God while he continued sitting in that dismal trance upon that mouldering mass of ruins. " Oh! my young master, pardon me for being here.—I wished not to overhear your words; but to me you have ever been kind, even as a son to his father.—Come, then, with the old man, back into the hall, and forsake not your mother who is sore afraid."

They returned, without speaking, down the glens, and through the old woods, and the door was shut upon them. Days and nights past on, and then a bell tolled; and the church-yard, that had sounded

to many feet, was again silent. The woods around the Hall were loaded with their summer glories; the river flowed on in its brightness; the smoke rose up to Heaven from the quiet cottages; and nature continued the same,—bright, fragrant, beautiful, and happy. But the Hall stood uninhabited; the rich furniture now felt the dust; and there were none to gaze on the pictures that graced the walls. He who had been thus bereaved went across seas to distant countries, from which his tenantry, for three springs, expected his return; but their expectations were never realized, for he died abroad. His remains were brought home to Scotland, according to a request in his will, to be laid by those of his wife; and now they rest together, beside the same simple Monument.

THE LOVER'S LAST VISIT.



THE window of the lonely cottage of Hilltop was beaming far above the highest birch-wood, seeming to travellers at a distance in the long valley below, who knew it not, to be a star in the sky. A bright fire was in the kitchen of that small tenement; the floor was washed, swept, and sanded, and not a footstep had marked its perfect neatness; a small table was covered, near the ingle, with a snow-white cloth, on which was placed a frugal evening meal; and in happy, but pensive mood sat there all alone the Woodcutter's only daughter, a comely and gentle creature, if not beautiful; such an one as diffuses pleasure round her in the hay field, and serenity over the seat in which she sits attentively on the Sabbath, listening to the word of God, or joining with mellow voice in his praise and worship. On this night, she expected a visit from her lover, that they might fix their marriage-day; and her parents, satisfied and happy that their child was about to be wedded to a respectable shepherd, had gone to pay a visit to their nearest neighbour in the glen.

A feeble and hesitating knock was at the door, not like the glad and joyful touch of a lover's hand; and cautiously opening it, Mary Robinson beheld a female figure wrapped up in a cloak, with her face concealed in a black bonnet. The stranger, whoever she might be, seemed wearied and worn out, and her feet bore witness to a long day's travel across the marshy mountains. Although she could scarcely help considering her an unwelcome visitor at such an hour, yet Mary had too much sweetness of disposition—too much humanity, not to request her to step forward into the hut; for it seemed as if the wearied woman had lost her way, and had come towards the shining window to be put right upon her journey to the low country.

The stranger took off her bonnet on reaching the fire; and Mary Robinson beheld the face of one whom, in youth, she had tenderly loved; although for some years past, the distance at which they lived from each other had kept them from meeting, and only a letter or two, written in their simple way, had given them a few notices of each other's existence. And now Mary had opportunity, in the first speechless gaze of recognition, to mark the altered face of her friend,—and her heart was touched with an ignorant compassion. "For mercy's sake! sit down, Sarah! and tell me what evil has befallen you; for you are as white as a ghost. Fear not to confide any thing to my bosom: we have herded sheep together on the lonesome braes—we have stripped the bark together in the more

lonesome woods;—we have played, laughed, sung, danced together;—we have talked merrily and gaily, but innocently enough surely of sweethearts together; and Sarah, graver thoughts, too, have we shared, for, when your poor brother died away like a frosted flower, I wept as if I had been his sister; nor can I ever be so happy in this world as to forget him. Tell me, my friend, why are you here? and why is your sweet face so ghastly?"

The heart of this unexpected visitor died within her at these kind and affectionate inquiries. For she had come on an errand that was likely to dash the joy from that happy countenance. Her heart upbraided her with the meanness of the purpose for which she had paid this visit; but that was only a passing thought; for was she, innocent and free from sin, to submit, not only to desertion, but to disgrace, and not trust herself and her wrongs, and her hopes of redress to her whom she loved as a sister, and whose generous nature she well knew, not even love, the changer of so many things, could change utterly; though, indeed, it might render it colder than of old to the anguish of a female friend?

"Oh! Mary, I must speak,—yet must my words make you grieve, far less for me than for yourself. Wretch, that I am,—I bring evil tidings into the dwelling of my dearest friend! These ribbands—they are worn for his sake—they become well, as he thinks, the auburn of your bonny hair;—that blue gown is

wore to-night because he likes it;—but, Mary, will you curse me to my face, when I declare before the God that made us, that that man is pledged unto me by all that is sacred between mortal creatures; and that I have here in my bosom written promises and oaths of love from him who, I was this morning told, is in a few days to be thy husband. Turn me out of the hut now if you choose, and let me, if you choose, die of hunger and fatigue, in the woods where we have so often walked together; for such death would be mercy to me, in comparison with your marriage with him who is mine for ever, if there be a God who heeds the oaths of the creatures he has made."

Mary Robinson had led a happy life, but a life of quiet thoughts, tranquil hopes, and meek desires. Tenderly and truly did she love the man to whom she was now betrothed; but it was because she had thought him gentle, manly, upright, sincere, and one that feared God. His character was unimpeached,—to her his behaviour had always been fond, affectionate, and respectful; that he was a fine-looking man, and could show himself among the best of the country round at church, and market, and fair-day, she saw and felt with pleasure and with pride. But in the heart of this poor, humble, contented, and pious girl, love was not a violent passion, but an affection sweet and profound. She looked forwards to her marriage with a joyful sedateness, knowing that she would have to toil for her family, if blest with

children; but happy in the thought of keeping her husband's house clean,—of preparing his frugal meals, and welcoming him when wearied at night to her faithful, and affectionate, and grateful bosom.

At first, perhaps, a slight flush of anger towards Sarah tinged her cheek; then followed in quick succession, or all blended together in one sickening pang, fear, disappointment, the sense of wrong, and the cruel pain of disesteeming and despising one on whom her heart had rested with all its best and purest affections. But though there was a keen struggle between many feelings in her heart, her resolution was formed during that very conflict; and she said within herself, "If it be even so, neither will I be so unjust as to deprive poor Sarah of the man who ought to marry her, nor will I be so mean and low-spirited, poor as I am, and dear as he has been unto me, as to become his wife."

While these thoughts were calmly passing in the soul of this magnanimous girl, all her former affection for Sarah revived; and, as she sighed for herself, she wept aloud for her friend. "Be quiet, be quiet, Sarah, and sob not so as if your heart were breaking. It need not be thus with you. Oh! sob not so sair! You surely have not walked in this one day from the heart of the parish of Montrath?"—"I have indeed done so, and I am as weak as the wreathed snaw. God knows, little matter if I should die away; for, after all, I fear he will never think of me for his wife, and you, Mary, will lose a husband with whom you would

have been happy. I feel, after all, that I must appear a mean wretch in your eyes."

There was silence between them; and Mary Robinson, looking at the clock, saw that it wanted only about a quarter of an hour from the time of tryst. "Give me the oaths and promises you mentioned out of your bosom, Sarah, that I may show them to Gabriel when he comes. And once more I promise, by all the sunny and all the snowy days we have sat together in the same plaid on the hillside, or in the lonesome charcoal plots and nests o' green in the woods, that if my Gabriel,—did I say my Gabriel?—has forsaken you and deceived me thus, never shall his lips touch mine again,—never shall he put a ring on my finger,—never shall this head lie in his bosom,---no, never, never; notwithstanding all the happy, too happy hours and days I have been with him, near or at a distance,—on the corn-rig,—among the meadow-hay,—in the singing-school,—at harvest-home,—in this room, and in God's own house. So help me God, but I will keep this vow!"

Poor Sarah told, in a few hurried words, the story of her love and desertion,—how Gabriel, whose business as a shepherd often took him into Montrath parish, had wooed her, and fixed every thing about their marriage, nearly a year ago. But that he had become causelessly jealous of a young man whom she scarcely knew; had accused her of want of virtue, and for many months had never once come to see her.

"This morning, for the first time, I heard, for a certainty, from one who knew Gabriel well, and all his concerns, that the banns had been proclaimed in the church between him and you; and that, in a day or two, you were to be married. And though I felt drowning, I determined to make a struggle for my life,—for Oh! Mary, Mary, my heart is not like your heart; it wants your wisdom, your meekness, your piety: and if I am to lose Gabriel, will I destroy my miserable life, and face the wrath of God sitting in judgment upon sinners."

At this burst of passion Sarah hid her face with her hands, as if sensible that she had committed blasphemy. Mary seeing her wearied, hungry, thirsty, and feverish, spoke to her in the most soothing manner; led her into the little parlour called the Spence, then removed into it the table, with the oaten cakes, butter and milk; and telling her to take some refreshment, and then lie down in the bed, but on no account to leave the room till called for, gave her a sisterly kiss, and left her. In a few minutes the outer-door opened, and Gabriel entered.

The lover said, "How is my sweet Mary?" with a beaming countenance; and gently drawing her to his bosom, he kissed her cheek. Mary did not—could not—wished not—at once to release herself from his enfolding arms. Gabriel had always treated her as the woman who was to be his wife; and though at this time her heart knew its own bitterness, yet she repelled not

endearments that were so lately delightful, and suffered him to take her almost in his arms to their accustomed seat. He held her hand in his, and began to speak in his usual kind and affectionate language. Kind and affectionate it was, for though he ought not to have done so, he loved her, as he thought, better than his life. Her heart could not in one small short hour forget a whole year of bliss. She could not yet fling away with her own hand what, only a few minutes ago, seemed to her the hope of paradise. Her soul sickened within her, and she wished that she were dead, or never had been born.

"O Gabriel! Gabriel! well indeed have I loved you; nor will I say, after all that has passed between us, that you are not deserving, after all, of a better love than mine. Vain were it to deny my love either to you, or to my own soul. But look me in the face—be not wrathful—think not to hide the truth either from yourself or me, for that now is impossible,—but tell me solemnly, as you shall answer to God at the judgment-day, if you know any reason why I must not be your wedded wife?" She kept her mild moist eyes fixed upon him; but he hung down his head, and uttered not a word, for he was guilty before her, before his own soul, and before God.

"Gabriel, never could we have been happy; for you often often told me, that all the secrets of your heart were known unto me, yet never did you tell me this. How could you desert the poor innocent creature that

loved you; and how could you use me so, who loved you perhaps as well as she, but whose heart God will teach, not to forget you, for that may I never do, but to think on you with that friendship and affection which innocently I can bestow upon you, when you are Sarah's husband. For, Gabriel, I have this night sworn, not in anger or passion—no no—but in sorrow and pity for another's wrongs—in sorrow also, deny it will I not, for my own, to look on you from this hour, as on one whose life is to be led apart from my life, and whose love must never more meet with my love. Speak not unto me, look not on me with beseeching eyes. Duty and religion forbid us ever to be man and wife. But you know there is one, besides me, whom you loved before you loved me, and, therefore, it may be better too; and that she loves you, and is faithful, as if God had made you one, I say without fear, I who have known her since she was a child, although fatally for the peace of us both, we have long lived apart. Sarah is in the house, and I will bring her unto you in tears, but not tears of penitence, for she is as innocent of that sin as I am, who now speak."

Mary went into the little parlour, and led Sarah forward in her hand. Despairing as she had been, yet when she had heard from poor Mary's voice speaking so fervently, that Gabriel had come, and that her friend was interceding in her behalf,—the poor girl had arranged her hair in a small looking-glass,—tied it up with a rib-

band which Gabriel had given her, and put into the breast of her gown a little gilt broach that contained locks of their blended hair. Pale but beautiful, for Sarah Pringle was the fairest girl in all the country, she advanced with a flush on that paleness of reviving hope, injured pride, and love that was ready to forgive all and forget all, so that once again she could be restored to the place in his heart that she had lost. "What have I ever done, Gabriel, that you should fling me from you? May my soul never live by the atonement of my Saviour, if I am not innocent of that sin, yea, of all distant thought of that sin with which you, even you, have in your hard-heartedness charged me. Look me in the face, Gabriel, and think of all I have been unto you, and if you say that before God, and in your own soul, you believe me guilty, then will I go away out into the dark night, and, long before morning, my troubles will be at end."

Truth was not only in her fervent and simple words, but in the tone of her voice, the colour of her face, and the light of her eyes. Gabriel had long shut up his heart against her. At first, he had doubted her virtue, and that doubt gradually weakened his affection. At last, he tried to believe her guilty, or to forget her altogether, when his heart turned to Mary Robinson, and he thought of making her his wife. His injustice—his wickedness—his baseness—which he had so long concealed, in some measure, from himself, by a dim feeling of wrong done him, and after-

wards by the pleasure of a new love, now appeared to him as they were, and without disguise. Mary took Sarah's hand and placed it within that of her contrite lover, for had the tumult of conflicting passions allowed him to know his own soul, such at that moment he surely was; saying with a voice as composed as the eyes with which she looked upon them, "I restore you to each other; and I already feel the comfort of being able to do my duty. I will be bride's-maid. And I now implore the blessing of God upon your marriage. Gabriel, your betrothed will sleep this night in my bosom. We will think of you, better perhaps, than you deserve. It is not for me to tell you what you have to repent of. Let us all three pray for each other this night, and evermore when we are on our knees before our Maker. The old people will soon be at home. Good night, Gabriel." He kissed Sarah—and, giving Mary a look of shame, humility, and reverence, he went home to meditation and repentance.

It was now Midsummer; and before the harvest had been gathered in throughout the higher valleys, or the sheep brought from the mountain-fold, Gabriel and Sarah were man and wife. Time past on, and a blooming family cheered their board and fireside. Nor did Mary Robinson, the Flower of the Forest, (for so the Wood-cutter's daughter was often called,) pass her life in single blessedness. She, too, became a wife and mother; and the two families, who lived at last on ad-

jacent farms, were remarkable for mutual affection, throughout all the parish; and more than one intermarriage took place between them, at a time when the worthy parents had almost entirely forgotten the trying incident of their youth.

THE MINISTER'S WIDOW.

THE dwelling of the Minister's Widow stood within a few fields of the beautiful village of Castle-Holm, about an hundred low-roofed houses that had taken the name of the parish of which they were the little romantic capital. Two small regular rows of cottages faced each other, on the gentle acclivity of a hill, separated by a broomy common of rich pasturage, through which hurried a translucent loch-born rivulet, with here and there its shelves and waterfalls overhung by the alder or weeping birch. Each straw-roofed abode, snug and merry as a bee-hive, had behind it a few roods of garden ground; so that, in spring, the village was covered with a fragrant cloud of blossoms on the pear, apple, and plum trees; and in autumn was brightened with golden fruitage. In the heart of the village stood the Manse—and in it had she, who was now a widow, passed twenty years of privacy and peace. On the death of her husband, she had retired with her family—three boys, to the pleasant cottage which she now inhabited. It belonged to the

old lady of the Castle, who was patroness of the parish, and who accepted, from the minister's widow, of a mere trifle as a nominal rent. On approaching the village, strangers always fixed upon Sunny-side for the Manse itself; for an air of serenity and retirement brooded over it as it looked out from below its sheltering elms, and the farm-yard with its corn-stack marking the homestead of the agricultural tenant was there wanting. A neat gravel-walk winded away, without a weed, from the white gate by the road side, through lilacs and laburnums; and the unruffled and unbroken order of all the breathing things that grew around, told that a quiet and probably small family lived within those beautiful boundaries.

The change from the Manse to Sunny-side had been with the widow a change from happiness to resignation. Her husband had died of a consumption; and for nearly a year she had known that his death was inevitable. Both of them had lived in the spirit of that Christianity which he had preached; and therefore the last year they passed together, in spite of the many bitter tears which she who was to be the survivor shed when none were by to see, was perhaps on the whole the best deserving of the name of happiness, of the twenty that had passed over their earthly union. To the dying man death had lost all his terrors. He sat beside his wife, with his bright hollow eyes and emaciated frame, among the balmy shades of his garden, and spoke with fervour of the many tender mercies

God had vouchsafed to them here, and of the promises made to all who believed in the gospel. They did not sit together to persuade, to convince, or to uphold each other's faith, for they believed in the things that were unseen, just as they believed in the beautiful blossomed arbour that then contained them in its shading silence. Accordingly, when the hour was at hand, in which he was to render up his spirit into the hand of God, he was like a grateful and wearied man falling into a sleep. His widow closed his eyes with her own hands, nor was her soul then disquieted within her. In a few days she heard the bell tolling, and from her sheltered window looked out, and followed the funeral with streaming eyes but an unweeping heart. With a calm countenance, and humble voice, she left and bade farewell to the sweet Manse, where she had so long been happy—and as her three beautiful boys, with faces dimmed by natural grief, but brightened by natural gladness, glided before her steps, she shut the gate of her new dwelling with an undisturbed soul, and moved her lips in silent thanksgiving to the God of the fatherless and the widow.

Her three boys, each one year older than the other, grew in strength and beauty, the pride and flower of the parish. In school they were quiet and composed; but in play-hours they bounded in their glee together like young deer, and led the sportful flock in all their excursions through wood or over moor. They resembled, in features and in voice, both of their gentle pa-

rents; but nature had moulded to quite another character their joyful and impetuous souls. When sitting or walking with their mother, they subdued their spirits down to suit her equable and gentle contentment; and behaved towards her with a delicacy and thoughtfulness, which made her heart to sing for joy. So too did they sit in the kirk on Sabbath, and during all that day the fountain of their joy seemed to subside and to lie still. They knew to stand solemnly with their mother, now and then on the calm summer evenings, beside their father's grave. They remembered well his pale kind face—his feeble walk—his bending frame—his hand laid in blessing on their young heads—and the last time they ever heard him speak. The glad boys had not forgotten their father; and that they proved by their piety unto her whom most on earth had their father loved. But their veins were filled with youth, health, and the electricity of joy; and they carried without and within the house such countenances as at any time coming upon their mother's eyes on a sudden, was like a torch held up in the dim melancholy of a mist, diffusing cheerfulness and elevation.

Years past on. Although the youngest was but a boy, the eldest stood on the verge of manhood, for he had entered his seventeenth year, and was bold, straight, and tall, with a voice deepening in its tone, a graver expression round the gladness of his eyes, and a sullen mass of coal-black hair hanging over

the smooth whiteness of his open forehead. But why describe the three beautiful brothers? They knew that there was a world lying at a distance that called upon them to leave the fields, and woods, and streams, and lochs of Castle-Holm; and, born and bred in peace as they had been, their restless hearts were yet all on fire, and they burned to join a life of danger, strife, and tumult. No doubt it gave their mother a sad heart to think that all her three boys who she knew loved her so tenderly could leave her all alone, and rush into the far-off world. But who shall curb nature? Who ought to try to curb it when its bent is strong? She reasoned a while, and tried to dissuade. But it was in vain. Then she applied to her friends; and the widow of the minister of Castle-Holm, retired as his life had been, was not without friends of rank and power. In one year her three boys had their wish,—in one year they left Sunny-side, one after the other; William to India,—Edward to Spain,—and Harry to a Man-of-War.

Still was the widow happy. The house that so often used to be ringing with joy was now indeed too too silent; and that utter noiselessness sometimes made her heart sick when sitting by herself in the solitary room. But by nature she was a gentle, meek, resigned, and happy being; and had she even been otherwise, the sorrow she had suffered, and the spirit of religion which her whole life had instilled, must have reconciled her to what was now her lot. Great cause had

she to be glad. Far away as India was, and seemingly more remote in her imagination, loving letters came from her son there in almost every ship that sailed for Britain; and if, at times, something delayed them, she came to believe in the necessity of such delays, and, without quaking, waited till the blessed letter did in truth appear. Of Edward, in Spain, she often heard, —though for him she suffered more than for the others. Not that she loved him better, for, like three stars, each possessed alike the calm heaven of her heart; but he was with Wellington, and the regiment, in which he served, seemed to be conspicuous in all skirmishes, and in every battle. Henry, her youngest boy, who left her before he had finished his fourteenth year, she often heard from; his ship sometimes put into port; and once, to the terror and consternation of her loving and yearning heart, the young midshipman stood before her, with a laughing voice, on the floor of the parlour, and rushed into her arms. He had got leave of absence for a fortnight; and proudly although sadly too did she look on her dear boy when he was sitting in the kirk with his uniform on, and his war-weapons by his side,—a fearless and beautiful stripling, on whom many an eye was insensibly turned even during service. And, to be sure, when the congregation were dismissed, and the young sailor came smiling out into the church-yard, never was there such a shaking of hands seen before. The old men blessed the gallant boy,—many of the mothers looked at him not without tears;

and the young maidens, who had heard that he had been in a bloody engagement, and once nearly shipwrecked, gazed upon him with unconscious blushes, and bosoms that beat with innocent emotion. A blessed week it was indeed that he was then with his mother; and never before had Sunny-side seemed so well to deserve its name.

To love, to fear, and to obey God, was the rule of this widow's life. And the time was near at hand when she was to be called upon to practise it in every silent, secret, darkest corner and recess of her afflicted spirit. Her eldest son, William, fell in storming a fort in India, as he led the forlorn hope. He was killed dead in a moment, and fell into the trench with all his lofty plumes. Edward was found dead at Talavera, with the colours of his regiment tied round his body. And the ship in which Henry was on board, that never would have struck her flag to any human power sailing on the sea, was driven by a storm on a reef of rocks,—went to pieces during the night,—and of eight hundred men not fifty were saved. Of that number Henry was not,—but his body was found next day on the sand, along with those of many of the crew, and buried, as it deserved, with all honours, and in a place where few but sailors slept.

In one month, one little month, did the tidings of the three deaths reach Sunny-side. A Government letter informed her of William's death, in India, and added, that, on account of the distinguished charac-

ter of the young soldier, a small pension would be settled on his mother. Had she been starving of want, instead of blest with competence, that word would have had then no meaning to her ear. Yet true it is, that a human—an earthly pride, cannot be utterly extinguished, even by severest anguish, in a mother's heart, yea even although her best hopes are garnered up in heaven; and the weeping widow could not help feeling it now, when, with the black wax below her eyes, she read how her dead boy had not fallen in the service of an ungrateful state. A few days afterwards, a letter came from himself, written in the highest spirits and tenderest affection. His mother looked at every word,—every letter,—every dash of the pen;—and still one thought, one thought only, was in her soul, "the living hand that traced these lines, where, what, is it now?" But this was the first blow only; ere the new-moon was visible, the widow knew that she was altogether childless.

It was in a winter hurricane that her youngest boy had perished; and the names of those whose health had hitherto been remembered at every festal Christmas, throughout all the parish, from the Castle to the humblest hut, were now either suppressed within the heart, or pronounced with a low voice and a sigh. During three months, Sunny-side looked almost as if uninhabited. Yet the smoke from one chimney told that the childless widow was sitting alone at her fireside; and when her only servant was spoken to at

church, or on the village green, and asked how her mistress was bearing these dispensations, the answer was, that her health seemed little, if at all impaired, and that she talked of coming to divine service in a few weeks, if her strength would permit. She had been seen, through the leafless hedge, standing at the parlour window, and had motioned with her hand to a neighbour who, in passing, had uncovered his head. Her weekly bounty to several poor and bed-ridden persons had never suffered but one week's intermission. It was always sent to them on Saturday night; and it was on a Saturday night that all the parish had been thrown into tears, with the news that Henry's ship had been wrecked, and the brave boy drowned. On that evening she had forgotten the poor.

But now the Spring had put forth her tender buds and blossoms,—had strewn the black ground under the shrubs with flowers,—and was bringing up the soft, tender, and beautiful green over the awakening face of the earth. There was a revival of the spirit of life, and gladness over the garden, and the one encircling field of Sunnyside; and so likewise, under the grace of God, was there a revival of the soul that had been sorrowing within its concealment. On the first sweet dewy Sabbath of May, the widow was seen closing behind her the little white gate, which for some months her hand had not touched. She gave a gracious, but mournful smile, to all her friends, as she passed on

through the midst of them, along with the minister, who had joined her on entering the church-yard; and although it was observed that she turned pale as she sat down in her pew, with the Bibles and Psalm-books that had belonged to her sons lying before her, as they themselves had enjoined when they went away, yet her face brightened even as her heart began to burn within her at the simple music of the psalm. The prayers of the congregation had some months before been requested for her, as a person in great distress; and during service, the young minister, according to her desire, now said a few simple words, that intimated to the congregation, that the childless widow was, through his lips, returning thanks to Almighty God, for that he had not forsaken her in her trouble, but sent resignation and peace.

From that day she was seen, as before, in her house, in her garden, along the many pleasant walks all about the village, and in the summer evenings, though not so often as formerly, in the dwellings of her friends, both high and low. From her presence a more gentle manner seemed to be breathed over the rude, and a more heartfelt delicacy over the refined. Few had suffered as she had suffered; all her losses were such as could be understood, felt, and wept over by all hearts; and all boisterousness or levity of joy would have seemed an outrage on her, who, sad and melancholy herself, yet wished all around her happy, and often lighted up her countenance with a grateful smile,

at the sight of that pleasure which she could not but observe to be softened, sobered, and subdued for her sake.

Such was the account of her, her sorrows, and her resignation, which I received on the first visit I paid to a family near Castle-Holm, after the final consummation of her grief. Well known to me had all the dear boys been; their father and mine had been labourers in the same vineyard; and as I had always been a welcome visitor, when a boy, at the Manse of Castle-Holm, so had I been, when a man, at Sunnyside. Last time I had been there, it was during the holidays, and I had accompanied the three boys on their fishing excursions to the Lochs in the moor; and in the evenings pursued with them their humble and useful studies: so I could not leave Castle-Holm without visiting Sunnyside, although my heart misgave me, and I wished I could have delayed it till another summer.

I sent word that I was coming to see her, and I found her sitting in that well-known little parlour, where I had partaken the pleasure of so many merry evenings, with those whose laughter was now extinguished. We sat for a while together speaking of ordinary topics, and then utterly silent. But the restraint she had imposed upon herself she either thought unnecessary any longer, or felt it to be impossible; and rising up, went to a little desk, from which she brought forth three miniatures, and laid them down

upon the table before us, saying, "Behold the faces of my three dead boys!"

So bright, breathing, and alive did they appear, that for a moment I felt impelled to speak to them, and to whisper their names. She beheld my emotion, and said unto me, "Oh! could you believe that they are all dead! Does not that smile on Willy's face seem as if it were immortal! Do not Edward's sparkling eyes look so bright as if the mists of death could never have overshadowed them! and think—Oh! think, that ever Henry's golden hair should have been draggled in the brine, and filled full, full, I doubt not, of the soiling sand!"

I put the senseless images one by one to my lips, and kissed their foreheads—for dearly had I loved these three brothers; and then I shut them up and removed them to another part of the room. I wished to speak, but I could not; and, looking on the face of her who was before me, I knew that her grief would find utterance, and that not until she had unburthened her heart could it be restored to repose.

"They would tell you, Sir, that I bear my trials well; but it is not so. Many, many unresigned and ungrateful tears has my God to forgive in me, a poor, weak, and repining worm. Almost every day, almost every night, do I weep before these silent and beautiful phantoms; and when I wipe away the breath and mist of tears from their faces, there are they smiling continually upon me! Oh! death is a

shocking thought when it is linked in love with creatures so young as these! More insupportable is gushing tenderness, than even dry despair; and, methinks, I could bear to live without them, and never to see them more, if I could only cease to pity them! But that can never be. It is for them I weep, not for myself. If they were to be restored to life, would I not lie down with thankfulness into the grave? William and Edward were struck down, and died, as they thought, in glory and triumph. Death to them was merciful. But who can know, although they may try to dream of it in horror, what the youngest of them, my sweet Harry, suffered, through that long dark howling night of snow, when the ship was going to pieces on the rocks!"

That last dismal thought held her for a while silent; and some tears stood in drops on her eye-lashes, but seemed again to be absorbed. Her heart appeared unable to cling to the horrors of the shipwreck, although it coveted them; and her thoughts reverted to other objects. "I walk often into the rooms where they used to sleep, and look on their beds till I think I see their faces lying with shut eyes on their pillows. Early in the morning, do I often think I hear them singing—I waken from troubled unrest, as if the knock of their sportive hands were at my door summoning me to rise. All their stated hours of study and of play—when they went to school and returned from it—when they came into meals—when

they said their prayers—when they went leaping at night to bed as lightsomely, after all the day's fatigue, as if they had just risen. Oh!—Sir—at all these times, and many, and many a time besides these, do I think of them whom you loved."

While thus she kept indulging the passion of her grief, she observed the tears I could no longer conceal; and the sight of my sorrow seemed to give, for a time, a loftier character to hers, as if my weakness made her aware of her own, and she had become conscious of the character of her vain lamentations. "Yet, why should I so bitterly weep? Pain had not troubled them—passion had not disturbed them—vice had not polluted them. May I not say, "My children are in heaven with their father"—and ought I not, therefore, to dry up all these foolish tears now and for evermore?"

Composure was suddenly shed over her countenance, like gentle sun-light over a cheerless day, and she looked around the room as if searching for some pleasant objects that eluded her sight. "See," said she, "yonder are all their books, arranged just as Henry arranged them on his unexpected visit. Alas! too many of them are about the troubles and battles of the sea! But it matters not now. You are looking at that drawing. It was done by himself,—that is the ship he was so proud of, sailing in sunshine and a pleasant breeze. Another ship indeed was she soon after, when she lay upon the reef! But as for the

books, I take them out of their places and dust them, and return them to their places, every week. I used to read to my boys, sitting round my knees, out of many of these books, before they could read themselves,— but now I never peruse them, for their cheerful stories are not for me. But there is one Book I do read, and without it I should long ago have been dead. The more the heart suffers, the more does it understand that Book. Never do I read a single chapter, without feeling assured of something more awful in our nature than I felt before. My own heart misgives me; my own soul betrays me; all my comforts desert me in a panic; but never yet once did I read one whole page of the New Testament that I did not know that the eye of God is on all his creatures, and on me like the rest, though my husband and all my sons are dead, and I may have many years yet to live alone on the earth."

After this we walked out into the little avenue, now dark with the deep rich shadows of summer beauty. We looked at that beauty, and spoke of the surpassing brightness of the weather during all June, and advancing July. It is not in nature always to be sad; and the remembrance of all her melancholy and even miserable confessions was now like an uncertain echo, as I beheld a placid smile on her face, a smile of such perfect resignation, that it might not falsely be called a smile of joy. We stood at the little white gate; and with a gentle voice, that perfectly accorded with that

expression, she bade God bless me; and then with composed steps, and now and then turning up, as she walked along, the massy flower-branches of the laburnum as bent with their load of beauty they trailed upon the ground, she disappeared into that retirement, which, notwithstanding all I had seen and heard, I could not but think deserved almost to be called happy, in a world which even the most thoughtless know is a world of sorrow.

THE SNOW-STORM.



In Summer there is beauty in the wildest moors of Scotland, and the wayfaring man who sits down for an hour's rest beside some little spring that flows unheard through the brightened moss and water-cresses, feels his weary heart revived by the silent, serene, and solitary prospect. On every side sweet sunny spots of verdure smile towards him from among the melancholy heather—unexpectedly in the solitude a stray sheep, it may be with its lambs, starts half-alarmed at his motionless figure—insects large, bright, and beautiful come careering by him through the desert air—nor does the Wild want its own songsters, the grey linnet, fond of the blooming furze, and now and then the lark mounting up to Heaven above the summits of the green pastoral hills. During such a sunshiny hour, the lonely cottage on the waste seems to stand in a paradise; and as he rises to pursue his journey,

the traveller looks back and blesses it with a mingled emotion of delight and envy. There, thinks he, abide the children of Innocence and Contentment, the two most benign spirits that watch over human life.

But other thoughts arise in the mind of him who may chance to journey through the same scene in the desolation of Winter. The cold bleak sky girdles the moor as with a belt of ice—life is frozen in air and on earth. The silence is not of repose but extinction—and should a solitary human dwelling catch his eye half-buried in the snow, he is sad for the sake of them whose destiny it is to abide far from the cheerful haunts of men, shrouded up in melancholy, by poverty held in thrall, or pining away in unvisited and untended disease.

But, in good truth, the heart of human life is but imperfectly discovered from its countenance; and before we can know what the summer, or what the winter yields for enjoyment or trial to our country's peasantry, we must have conversed with them in their fields and by their firesides; and made ourselves acquainted with the powerful ministry of the Seasons, not over those objects alone that feed the eye and the imagination, but over all the incidents, occupations, and events that modify or constitute the existence of the poor.

I have a short and simple story to tell of the winter-life of the moorland cottager—a story but of one evening—with few events and no signal catastrophe—but

which may haply please those hearts whose delight it is to think on the humble under-plots that are carrying on in the great Drama of Life.

Two cottagers, husband and wife, were sitting by their cheerful peat-fire one winter evening, in a small lonely hut on the edge of a wide moor, at some miles distance from any other habitation. There had been, at one time, several huts of the same kind erected close together, and inhabited by families of the poorest class of day-labourers who found work among the distant farms, and at night returned to dwellings which were rent-free, with their little gardens won from the waste. But one family after another had dwindled away, and the turf-built huts had all fallen into ruins, except one that had always stood in the centre of this little solitary village, with its summer-walls covered with the richest honeysuckles, and in the midst of the brightest of all the gardens. It alone now sent up its smoke into the clear winter sky—and its little end-window, now lighted up, was the only ground star that shone towards the belated traveller, if any such ventured to cross, on a winter night, a scene so dreary and desolate. The affairs of the small household were all arranged for the night. The little rough poney that had drawn in a sledge, from the heart of the Black-Moss, the fuel by whose blaze the cotters were now sitting cheerily, and the little Highland cow, whose milk enabled them to live, were standing amicably together, under cover of a rude shed, of which

one side was formed by the peat-stack, and which was at once byre, and stable, and hen-roost. Within, the clock ticked cheerfully as the fire-light reached its old oak-wood case across the yellow-sanded floor—and a small round table stood between, covered with a snow-white cloth, on which were milk and oat-cakes, the morning, mid-day, and evening meal of these frugal and contented cotters. The spades and the mattocks of the labourer were collected into one corner, and showed that the succeeding day was the blessed Sabbath—while on the wooden chimney-piece was seen lying an open Bible ready for family worship.

The father and the mother were sitting together without opening their lips, but with their hearts overflowing with happiness, for on this Saturday-night they were, every minute, expecting to hear at the latch the hand of their only daughter, a maiden of about fifteen years, who was at service with a farmer over the hills. This dutiful child was, as they knew, to bring home to them "her sair-won penny fee," a pittance which, in the beauty of her girl-hood, she earned singing at her work, and which, in the benignity of that sinless time, she would pour with tears into the bosoms she so dearly loved. Forty shillings a-year were all the wages of sweet Hannah Lee—but though she wore at her labour a tortoise-shell comb in her auburn hair, and though in the kirk none were more becomingly arrayed than she, one half, at least, of her earnings were to be reserved for the holiest of

all purposes, and her kind innocent heart was gladdened when she looked on the little purse that was, on the long-expected Saturday-night, to be taken from her bosom, and put, with a blessing, into the hand of her father, now growing old at his daily toils.

Of such a child the happy cotters were thinking in their silence. And well indeed might they be called happy. It is at that sweet season that filial piety is most beautiful. Their own Hannah had just outgrown the mere unthinking gladness of childhood, but had not yet reached that time, when inevitable selfishness mixes with the pure current of love. She had begun to think on what her affectionate heart had felt so long; and when she looked on the pale face and bending frame of her mother, on the deepening wrinkles and whitening hairs of her father, often would she lie weeping for their sakes on her midnight bed—and wish that she were beside them as they slept, that she might kneel down and kiss them, and mention their names over and over again in her prayer. The parents whom before she had only loved, her expanding heart now also venerated. With gushing tenderness was now mingled a holy fear and an awful reverence. She had discerned the relation in which she an only child stood to her poor parents now that they were getting old, and there was not a passage in Scripture that spake of parents or of children, from Joseph sold into slavery, to Mary weeping below the Cross, that

was not written, never to be obliterated, on her uncorrupted heart.

The father rose from his seat, and went to the door to look out into the night. The stars were in thousands—and the full moon was risen. It was almost light as day, and the snow, that seemed encrusted with diamonds, was so hardened by the frost, that his daughter's homeward feet would leave no mark on its surface. He had been toiling all day among the distant Castle-woods, and, stiff and wearied as he now was, he was almost tempted to go to meet his child—but his wife's kind voice dissuaded him, and returning to the fireside, they began to talk of her whose image had been so long passing before them in their silence.

"She is growing up to be a bonny lassie," said the mother; "her long and weary attendance on me during my fever last spring kept her down awhile—but now she is sprouting fast and fair as a lily, and may the blessing of God be as dew and as sunshine to our sweet flower all the days she bloometh upon this earth." "Aye, Agnes," replied the father, "we are not very old yet—though we are getting older—and a few years will bring her to woman's estate, and what thing on this earth, think ye, human or brute, would ever think of injuring her? Why, I was speaking about her yesterday to the minister as he was riding by, and he told me that none answered at the Examination in the Kirk so well as Hannah. Poor thing—I well think she has all the Bible by heart—indeed,

she has read but little else—only some stories, too true ones, of the blessed martyrs, and some o' the auld sangs o' Scotland, in which there is nothing but what is good, and which, to be sure, she sings, God bless her, sweeter than any laverock." "Aye—were we both to die this very night she would be happy. Not that she would forget us all the days of her life. But have you not seen, husband, that God always makes the orphan happy? None so little lonesome as they! They come to make friends o' all the bonny and sweet things in the world around them, and all the kind hearts in the world make friends o' them. They come to know that God is more especially the Father o' them on earth whose parents he has taken up to heaven—and therefore it is that they for whom so many have fears, fear not at all for themselves, but go dancing and singing along like children whose parents are both alive! Would it not be so with our dear Hannah? So douce and thoughtful a child—but never sad nor miserable—ready it is true to shed tears for little, but as ready to dry them up and break out into smiles! I know not why it is, husband, but this night my heart warms towards her beyond usual. The moon and stars are at this moment looking down upon her, and she looking up to them, as she is glinting homewards over the snow. I wish she were but here, and taking the comb out o' her bonny hair and letting it all fall down in clusters before the fire, to melt away the cranreuch!"

While the parents were thus speaking of their daugh-

ter, a loud sugh of wind came suddenly over the cottage, and the leafless ash-tree under whose shelter it stood, creaked and groaned dismally as it passed by. The father started up, and going again to the door, saw that a sudden change had come over the face of the night. The moon had nearly disappeared, and was just visible in a dim, yellow, glimmering den in the sky. All the remote stars were obscured, and only one or two faintly seemed in a sky that half an hour before was perfectly cloudless, but that was now driving with rack, and mist, and sleet, the whole atmosphere being in commotion. He stood for a single moment to observe the direction of this unforeseen storm, and then hastily asked for his staff. "I thought I had been more weather-wise—A storm is coming down from the Cairnbrae-hawse, and we shall have nothing but a wild night." He then whistled on his dog—an old sheep-dog, too old for its former labours—and set off to meet his daughter, who might then, for ought he knew, be crossing the Black-moss. The mother accompanied her husband to the door, and took a long frightened look at the angry sky. As she kept gazing, it became still more terrible. The last shred of blue was extinguished—the wind went whirling in roaring eddies, and great flakes of snow circled about in the middle air, whether drifted up from the ground, or driven down from the clouds, the fear-stricken mother knew not, but she at least knew, that it seemed a night of danger, despair, and death. "Lord have mercy on

us, James, what will become of our poor bairn!" But her husband heard not her words, for he was already out of sight in the snow-storm, and she was left to the terror of her own soul in that lonesome cottage.

Little Hannah Lee had left her master's house, soon as the rim of the great moon was seen by her eyes, that had been long anxiously watching it from the window, rising, like a joyful dream, over the gloomy mountain-tops; and all by herself she tripped along beneath the beauty of the silent heaven. Still as she kept ascending and descending the knolls that lay in the bosom of the glen, she sung to herself a song, a hymn, or a psalm, without the accompaniment of the streams, now all silent in the frost; and ever and anon she stopped to try to count the stars that lay in some more beautiful part of the sky, or gazed on the constellations that she knew, and called them, in her joy, by the names they bore among the shepherds. There were none to hear her voice, or see her smiles, but the ear and eye of Providence. As on she glided, and took her looks from heaven, she saw her own little fireside—her parents waiting for her arrival—the Bible opened for worship—her own little room kept so neatly for her, with its mirror hanging by the window, in which to braid her hair by the morning light—her bed prepared for her by her mother's hand—the primroses in her garden peeping through the snow—old Tray, who ever welcomed her home with his dim white eyes—the poney and the cow;—friends all, and inmates of

that happy household. So stepped she along, while the snow diamonds glittered around her feet, and the frost wove a wreath of lucid pearls round her forehead.

She had now reached the edge of the Black-moss, which lay half way between her master's and her father's dwelling, when she heard a loud noise coming down Glen-Scrae, and in a few seconds she felt on her face some flakes of snow. She looked up the glen, and saw the snow-storm coming down, fast as a flood. She felt no fears; but she ceased her song; and had there been a human eye to look upon her there, it might have seen a shadow on her face. She continued her course, and felt bolder and bolder every step that brought her nearer to her parents' house. But the snow-storm had now reached the Black-moss, and the broad line of light that had lain in the direction of her home, was soon swallowed up, and the child was in utter darkness. She saw nothing but the flakes of snow, interminably intermingled, and furiously wafted in the air, close to her head; she heard nothing but one wild, fierce, fitful howl. The cold became intense, and her little feet and hands were fast being benumbed into insensibility.

"It is a fearful change," muttered the child to herself; but still she did not fear, for she had been born in a moorland cottage, and lived all her days among the hardships of the hills. "What will become of the poor sheep!" thought she,—but still she scarce-

ly thought of her own danger, for innocence, and youth, and joy, are slow to think of aught evil befalling themselves, and thinking benignly of all living things, forget their own fear in their pity for others' sorrow. At last, she could no longer discern a single mark on the snow, either of human steps, or of sheep-tract, or the foot-print of a wild-fowl. Suddenly, too, she felt out of breath and exhausted,—and, shedding tears for herself at last, sank down in the snow,

It was now that her heart began to quake with fear. She remembered stories of shepherds lost in the snow,—of a mother and a child frozen to death on that very moor,—and, in a moment, she knew that she was to die. Bitterly did the poor child weep, for death was terrible to her, who, though poor, enjoyed the bright little world of youth and innocence. The skies of heaven were dearer than she knew to her,—so were the flowers of earth. She had been happy at her work,—happy in her sleep,—happy in the kirk on Sabbath. A thousand thoughts had the solitary child,—and in her own heart was a spring of happiness, pure and undisturbed as any fount that sparkles unseen all the year through in some quiet nook among the pastoral hills. But now there was to be an end of all this,—she was to be frozen to death—and lie there till the thaw might come; and then her father would find her body, and carry it away to be buried in the kirk-yard.

The tears were frozen on her cheeks, as soon as

shed,—and scarcely had her little hands strength to clasp themselves together, as the thought of an over-ruling and merciful Lord came across her heart. Then, indeed, the fears of this religious child were calmed, and she heard without terror the plover's wailing cry, and the deep boom of the bittern sounding in the moss. "I will repeat the Lord's Prayer." And drawing her plaid more closely around her, she whispered, beneath its ineffectual cover; "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name,—thy kingdom come, —thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Had human aid been within fifty yards, it could have been of no avail—eye could not see her—ear could not hear her in that howling darkness. But that low prayer was heard in the centre of eternity,—and that little sinless child was lying in the snow, beneath the all-seeing eye of God.

The maiden having prayed to her Father in Heaven —then thought of her father on earth. Alas! they were not far separated! The father was lying but a short distance from his child;—he too had sunk down in the drifting snow, after having, in less than an hour, exhausted all the strength of fear, pity, hope, despair, and resignation, that could rise in a father's heart blindly seeking to rescue his only child from death, thinking that one desperate exertion might enable them to perish in each other's arms. There they lay, within a stone's throw of each other, while a huge snow-drift was every moment piling itself up into a

more insurmountable barrier between the dying parent and his dying child.

There was all this while a blazing fire in the cottage—a white spread table—and beds prepared for the family to lie down in peace. Yet was she who sat therein more to be pitied than the old man and the child stretched upon the snow. "I will not go to seek them—that would be tempting Providence—and wilfully putting out the lamp of life. No! I will abide here, and pray for their souls!" Then, as she knelt down, looked she at the useless fire burning away so cheerfully, when all she loved might be dying of cold—and, unable to bear the thought, she shrieked out a prayer, as if she might pierce the sky up to the very throne of God, and send with it her own miserable soul to plead before him for the deliverance of her child and husband. She then fell down in blessed forgetfulness of all trouble, in the midst of the solitary cheerfulness of that bright-burning hearth—and the Bible, which she had been trying to read in the pauses of her agony, remained clasped in her hands.

Hannah Lee had been a servant for more than six months—and it was not to be thought that she was not beloved in her master's family. Soon after she had left the house, her master's son, a youth of about eighteen years, who had been among the hills looking after the sheep, came home, and was disappointed to find that he had lost an opportunity of accompanying Hannah part of the way to her father's cottage. But the

hour of eight had gone by, and not even the company of young William Grieve could induce the kind-hearted daughter to delay setting out on her journey a few minutes beyond the time promised to her parents. "I do not like the night," said William—"there will be a fresh fall of snow soon, or the witch of Glen Scrae is a liar, for a snow cloud is hanging o'er the Birch-tree-linn, and it may be down to the Black-moss as soon as Hannah Lee." So he called his two sheep-dogs that had taken their place under the long-table before the window, and set out, half in joy, half in fear, to overtake Hannah, and see her safely across the Black-moss.

The snow began to drift so fast, that before he had reached the head of the glen, there was nothing to be seen but a little bit of the wooden rail of the bridge across the Sauch-burn. William Grieve was the most active shepherd in a large pastoral parish—he had often past the night among the wintry hills for the sake of a few sheep, and all the snow that ever fell from heaven would not have made him turn back when Hannah Lee was before him; and as his terrified heart told him, in imminent danger of being lost.—As he advanced, he felt that it was no longer a walk of love or friendship, for which he had been glad of an excuse. Death stared him in the face, and his young soul, now beginning to feel all the passions of youth, was filled with frenzy. He had seen Hannah every day—at the fireside—at work—in the kirk—on holidays—at

prayers—bringing supper to his aged parents—smiling and singing about the house from morning till night. She had often brought his own meal to him among the hills—and he now found that though he had never talked to her about love, except smilingly and playfully, that he loved her beyond father or mother or his own soul. "I will save thee, Hannah," he cried with a loud sob, "or lie down beside thee in the snow—and we will die together in our youth." A wild whistling wind went by him, and the snow-flakes whirled so fiercely round his head, that he staggered on for a while in utter blindness. He knew the path that Hannah must have taken, and went forwards shouting aloud, and stopping every twenty yards to listen for a voice. He sent his well-trained dogs over the snow in all directions—repeating to them her name, "Hannah Lee," that the dumb animals might, in their sagacity, know for whom they were searching; and as they looked up in his face, and set off to scour the moor, he almost believed that they knew his meaning, (and it is probable they did,) and were eager to find in her bewilderment the kind maiden by whose hand they had so often been fed. Often went they off into the darkness, and as often returned, but their looks showed that every quest had been in vain. Meanwhile the snow was of a fearful depth, and falling without intermission or diminution. Had the young shepherd been thus alone, walking across the moor on his ordinary business, it is probable that he might

have been alarmed for his own safety—nay that, in spite of all his strength and agility, he might have sunk down beneath the inclemency of the night and perished. But now the passion of his soul carried him with supernatural strength along, and extricated him from wreath and pitfal. Still there was no trace of poor Hannah Lee—and one of his dogs at last came close to his feet, worn out entirely, and afraid to leave its master—while the other was mute, and, as the shepherd thought, probably unable to force its way out of some hollow or through some floundering drift. Then he all at once knew that Hannah Lee was dead—and dashed himself down in the snow in a fit of passion. It was the first time that the youth had ever been sorely tried—all his hidden and unconscious love for the fair lost girl had flowed up from the bottom of his heart—and at once the sole object which had blessed his life and made him the happiest of the happy, was taken away and cruelly destroyed—so that sullen, wrathful, baffled, and despairing, there he lay cursing his existence, and in too great agony to think of prayer, "God," he then thought, "has forsaken me, and why should he think on me, when he suffers one so good and beautiful as Hannah to be frozen to death?" God thought both of him and Hannah—and through his infinite mercy forgave the sinner in his wild turbulence of passion. William Grieve had never gone to bed without joining in prayer—and he revered the Sabbath-day and kept it holy. Much is forgiven to the

human heart, by him who so fearfully framed it; and God is not slow to pardon the love which one human being bears to another, in his frailty—even though that love forget or arraign his own unsleeping providence. His voice has told us to love one another—and William loved Hannah in simplicity, innocence, and truth. That she should perish was a thought so dreadful, that, in its agony, God seemed a ruthless being—"blow—blow—blow—and drift us up for ever—we cannot be far asunder—O Hannah—Hannah—think ye not that the fearful God has forsaken us?"

As the boy groaned these words passionately through his quivering lips, there was a sudden lowness in the air, and he heard the barking of his absent dog, while the one at his feet hurried off in the direction of the sound, and soon loudly joined the cry. It was not a bark of surprise—or anger—or fear—but of recognition and love. William sprung up from his bed in the snow, and with his heart knocking at his bosom even to sickness, he rushed headlong through the drifts, with a giant's strength, and fell down half dead with joy and terror beside the body of Hannah Lee.

But he soon recovered from that fit, and lifting the cold corpse in his arms, he kissed her lips, and her cheeks, and her forehead, and her closed eyes, till, as he kept gazing on her face in utter despair, her head fell back on his shoulder, and a long deep sigh came from her inmost bosom. "She is yet alive, thank God!"—and as that expression left his lips for the first

time that night, he felt a pang of remorse: "I said, O God, that thou hadst forsaken us—I am not worthy to be saved; but let not this maiden perish, for the sake of her parents, who have no other child." The distracted youth prayed to God with the same earnestness as if he had been beseeching a fellow-creature, in whose hand was the power of life and of death. The presence of the Great Being was felt by him in the dark and howling wild, and strength was imparted to him as to a deliverer. He bore along the fair child in his arms, even as if she had been a lamb. The snow-drift blew not—the wind fell dead—a sort of glimmer, like that of an upbreaking and disparting storm, gathered about him—his dogs barked, and jumped, and burrowed joyfully in the snow—and the youth, strong in sudden hope, exclaimed, "With the blessing of God, who has not deserted us in our sore distress, will I carry thee, Hannah, in my arms, and lay thee down alive in the house of thy father." At this moment there were no stars in heaven, but she opened her dim blue eyes upon him in whose bosom she was unconsciously lying, and said, as in a dream, "Send the ribband that ties up my hair, as a keepsake to William Grieve." "She thinks that she is on her death-bed, and forgets not the son of her master. It is the voice of God that tells me she will not now die, and that, under His grace, I shall be her deliverer."

The short-lived rage of the storm was soon over, and William could attend to the beloved being on his

bosom. The warmth of his heart seemed to infuse life into her's; and as he gently placed her feet on the snow, till he muffled her up in his plaid, as well as in her own, she made an effort to stand, and with extreme perplexity and bewilderment faintly inquired, where she was, and what fearful misfortune had befallen them? She was, however, too weak to walk; and as her young master carried her along, she murmured, "O William! what if my father be in the moor?—For if you who need care so little about me, have come hither, as I suppose, to save my life, you may be sure that my father sat not within doors during the storm." As she spoke it was calm below, but the wind was still alive in the upper air, and cloud, rack, mist, and sleet, were all driving about in the sky. Out shone for a moment the pallid and ghostly moon, through a rent in the gloom, and by that uncertain light, came staggering forward the figure of a man. "Father—Father," cried Hannah—and his grey hairs were already on her cheek. The barking of the dogs and the shouting of the young shepherd had struck his ear, as the sleep of death was stealing over him, and with the last effort of benumbed nature, he had roused himself from that fatal torpor, and prest through the snow-wreath that had separated him from his child. As yet they knew not of the danger each had endured,—but each judged of the other's suffering from their own, and father and daughter regarded one another

as creatures rescued, and hardly yet rescued, from death.

But a few minutes ago, and the three human beings who loved each other so well, and now feared not to cross the Moor in safety, were, as they thought, on their death-beds. Deliverance now shone upon them all like a gentle fire, dispelling that pleasant but deadly drowsiness; and the old man was soon able to assist William Grieve in leading Hannah along through the snow. Her colour and her warmth returned, and her lover—for so might he well now be called—felt her heart gently beating against his side. Filled as that heart was with gratitude to God, joy in her deliverance, love to her father, and purest affection for her master's son, never before had the innocent maiden known what was happiness—and never more was she to forget it. The night was now almost calm, and fast returning to its former beauty—when the party saw the first twinkle of the fire through the low window of the Cottage of the Moor. They soon were at the garden gate—and to relieve the heart of the wife and mother within, they talked loudly and cheerfully—naming each other familiarly, and laughing between, like persons who had known neither danger nor distress.

No voice answered from within—no footstep came to the door, which stood open as when the father had left it in his fear, and now he thought with affright that his wife, feeble as she was, had been unable to

support the loneliness, and had followed him out into the night, never to be brought home alive. As they bore Hannah into the house, this fear gave way to worse, for there upon the hard clay floor lay the mother upon her face, as if murdered by some savage blow. She was in the same deadly swoon into which she had fallen on her husband's departure three hours before. The old man raised her up, and her pulse was still—so was her heart—her face pale and sunken—and her body cold as ice. "I have recovered a daughter," said the old man, "but I have lost a wife;" and he carried her, with a groan, to the bed, on which he laid her lifeless body. The sight was too much for Hannah, worn out as she was, and who had hitherto been able to support herself in the delightful expectation of gladdening her mother's heart by her safe arrival.—She, too, now swooned away, and, as she was placed on the bed beside her mother, it seemed, indeed, that death, disappointd of his prey on the wild moor, had seized it in the cottage, and by the fireside. The husband knelt down by the bed-side, and held his wife's icy hand in his, while William Grieve, appalled and awe-stricken, hung over his Hannah, and inwardly implored God that the night's wild adventure might not have so ghastly an end. But Hannah's young heart soon began once more to beat—and soon as she came to her recollection, she rose up with a face whiter than ashes and free from all smiles, as if none had ever

played there, and joined her father and young master in their efforts to restore her mother to life.

It was the mercy of God that had struck her down to the earth, insensible to the shrieking winds, and the fears that would otherwise have killed her. Three hours of that wild storm had passed over her head, and she heard nothing more than if she had been asleep in a breathless night of the summer dew. Not even a dream had touched her brain, and when she opened her eyes which, as she thought, had been but a moment shut, she had scarcely time to recal to her recollection the image of her husband rushing out into the storm, and of a daughter therein lost, till she beheld that very husband kneeling tenderly by her bed-side, and that very daughter smoothing the pillow on which her aching temples reclined. But she knew from the white stedfast countenances before her that there had been tribulation and deliverance, and she looked on the beloved beings ministering by her bed, as more fearfully dear to her from the unimagined danger from which she felt assured they had been rescued by the arm of the Almighty.

There is little need to speak of returning recollection, and returning strength. They had all now power to weep, and power to pray. The Bible had been lying in its place ready for worship—and the father read aloud that chapter in which is narrated our Saviour's act of miraculous power, by which he saved Peter from the sea. Soon as the solemn thoughts

awakened by that act of mercy so similar to that which had rescued themselves from death had subsided, and they had all risen up from prayer, they gathered themselves in gratitude round the little table which had stood so many hours spread—and exhausted nature was strengthened and restored by a frugal and simple meal partaken of in silent thankfulness. The whole story of the night was then calmly recited—and when the mother heard how the stripling had followed her sweet Hannah into the storm, and borne her in his arms through a hundred drifted heaps—and then looked upon her in her pride, so young, so innocent, and so beautiful, she knew, that were the child indeed to become an orphan, there was One, who, if there was either trust in nature, or truth in religion, would guard and cherish her all the days of her life.

It was not nine o'clock when the storm came down from Glen Scrae upon the Black-moss, and now in a pause of silence the clock struck twelve. Within these three hours William and Hannah had led a life of trouble and of joy, that had enlarged and kindled their hearts within them—and they felt that henceforth they were to live wholly for each other's sakes. His love was the proud and exulting love of a deliverer who, under Providence, had saved from the frost and the snow, the innocence and the beauty of which his young passionate heart had been so desperately enamoured—and he now thought of his own Hannah Lee ever more moving about in his father's house, not as a servant, but as a daughter—and when some few

happy years had gone by, his own most beautiful and most loving wife. The innocent maiden still called him her young master—but was not ashamed of the holy affection which she now knew that she had long felt for the fearless youth on whose bosom she had thought herself dying in that cold and miserable moor. Her heart leapt within her when she heard her parents bless him by his name—and when he took her hand into his before them, and vowed before that Power who had that night saved them from the snow, that Hannah Lee should ere long be his wedded wife —she wept and sobbed as if her heart would break in a fit of strange aud insupportable happiness.

The young shepherd rose to bid them farewell— "My father will think I am lost," said he, with a grave smile, "and my Hannah's mother knows what it is to fear for a child." So nothing was said to detain him, and the family went with him to the door. The skies smiled as serenely as if a storm had never swept before the stars—the moon was sinking from her meridian, but in cloudless splendour—and the hollow of the hills was hushed as that of heaven. Danger there was none over the placid night-scene—the happy youth soon crossed the Black-moss, now perfectly still—and, perhaps, just as he was passing, with a shudder of gratitude, the very spot where his sweet Hannah Lee had so nearly perished, she was lying down to sleep in her innocence, or dreaming of one now dearer to her than all on earth but her parents.

THE ELDER'S DEATH-BED.



It was on a fierce and howling winter day that I was crossing the dreary moor of Auchindown, on my way to the Manse of that parish, a solitary pedestrian. The snow, which had been incessantly falling for a week past, was drifted into beautiful but dangerous wreaths, far and wide, over the melancholy expanse—and the scene kept visibly shifting before me, as the strong wind that blew from every point of the compass struck the dazzling masses, and heaved them up and down in endless transformation. There was something inspiriting in the labour with which, in the buoyant strength of youth, I forced my way through the storm—and I could not but enjoy those gleamings of sunlight that ever and anon burst through some unexpected opening in the sky, and gave a character of cheerfulness, and even warmth to the sides or summits of the stricken hills. Sometimes the wind stopt of a sudden, and then the air was as silent as the snow—not a murmur to be heard from spring or stream, now all frozen up over those high moorlands. As the mo-

mentary cessations of the sharp drift allowed my eyes to look onwards and around, I saw here and there up the little opening valleys, cottages just visible beneath the black stems of their snow-covered clumps of trees, or beside some small spot of green pasture kept open for the sheep. These intimations of life and happiness came delightfully to me in the midst of the desolation; and the barking of a dog, attending some Shepherd in his quest on the hill, put fresh vigour into my limbs, telling me that, lonely as I seemed to be, I was surrounded by cheerful though unseen company, and that I was not the only wanderer over the snows.

As I walked along, my mind was insensibly filled with a crowd of pleasant images of rural winter-life, that helped me gladly onwards over many miles of moor. I thought of the severe but cheerful labours of the barn—the mending of farm-gear by the fireside—the wheel turned by the foot of old age, less for gain than as a thrifty pastime—the skilful mother, making "auld claes look amaist as weel's the new"—the ballad unconsciously listened to by the family all busy at their own tasks round the singing maiden—the old traditionary tale told by some wayfarer hospitably housed till the storm should blow by—the unexpected visit of neighbours on need or friendship—or the footstep of lover undeterred by snow-drifts that have buried up his flocks;—but above all, I thought of those hours of religious worship that have not yet escaped from the domestic life of the Peasantry of Scotland—

of the sound of psalms that the depth of snow cannot deaden to the ear of Him to whom they are chanted—and of that sublime Sabbath-keeping which, on days too tempestuous for the kirk, changes the cottage of the Shepherd into the Temple of God.

With such glad and peaceful images in my heart, I travelled along that dreary moor, with the cutting wind in my face, and my feet sinking in the snow, or sliding on the hard blue ice beneath it—as cheerfully as I ever walked in the dewy warmth of a summer morning, through fields of fragrance and of flowers. And now I could discern, within half an hour's walk, before me, the spire of the church, close to which stood the Manse of my aged friend and benefactor. My heart burned within me as a sudden gleam of stormy sunlight tipt it with fire—and I felt, at that moment, an inexpressible sense of the sublimity of the character of that grey-headed Shepherd who had, for fifty years, abode in the wilderness, keeping together his own happy little flock.

As I was ascending a knoll, I saw before me on horseback an old man, with his long white hairs beaten against his face, who nevertheless advanced with a calm countenance against the hurricane. It was no other than my father, of whom I had been thinking—for my father had I called him for many years—and for many years my father had he truly been. My surprise at meeting him on such a moor—on such a day, was but momentary, for I knew that he was a

Shepherd who cared not for the winter's wrath. As he stopped to take my hand kindly into his, and to give his blessing to his long-expected visitor, the wind fell calm—the whole face of the sky was softened, and brightness, like a smile, went over the blushing and crimsoned snow. The very elements seemed then to respect the hoary-head of fourscore—and after our first greeting was over, when I looked around, in my affection, I felt how beautiful was winter.

"I am going," said he, "to visit a man at the point of death—a man whom you cannot have forgotten—whose head will be missed in the kirk next Sabbath by all my congregation—a devout man, who feared God all his days, and whom, on this awful trial, God will assuredly remember. I am going, my son, to the Hazel-Glen."

I knew well in childhood that lonely farm-house, so far off among the beautiful wild green hills—and it was not likely that I had forgotten the name of its possessor. For six years' Sabbaths I had seen the ELDER in his accustomed place beneath the pulpit—and, with a sort of solemn fear, had looked on his stedfast countenance during sermon, psalm, and prayer. On returning to the scenes of my infancy, I now met the Pastor going to pray by his death-bed—and with the privilege which nature gives us to behold, even in their last extremity, the loving and the beloved, I turned to accompany him to the house of sorrow, resignation, and death

And now, for the first time, I observed, walking close to the feet of his horse, a little boy of about ten years of age, who kept frequently looking up in the Pastor's face, with his blue eyes bathed in tears. A changeful expression of grief, hope, and despair, made almost pale cheeks, that otherwise were blooming in health and beauty,—and I recognized, in the small features and smooth forehead of childhood, a resemblance to the aged man whom we understood was now lying on his death-bed. "They had to send his grandson for me through the snow, mere child as he is," said the Minister to me, looking tenderly on the boy; "but love makes the young heart bold—and there is One who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." I again looked on the fearless child with his rosy cheeks, blue eyes, and yellow hair, so unlike grief or sorrow, yet now sobbing aloud as his heart would break. "I do not fear but that my grandfather will yet recover, soon as the Minister has said one single prayer by his bed-side. I had no hope, or little, as I was running by myself to the Manse over hill after hill, but I am full of hopes now that we are together; and oh! if God suffers my grandfather to recover, I will lie awake all the long winter nights blessing him for his mercy. I will rise up in the middle of the darkness, and pray to him in the cold on my naked knees!" and here his voice was choked, while he kept his eyes fixed, as if for consolation and

encouragement, on the solemn and pitying countenance of the kind-hearted pious Old Man.

We soon left the main-road, and struck off through scenery that, covered as it was with the bewildering snow, I sometimes dimly and sometimes vividly remembered; our little guide keeping ever a short distance before us, and with a sagacity like that of instinct, showing us our course, of which no trace was visible, save occasionally his own little foot-prints as he had been hurrying to the Manse.

After crossing, for several miles, morass, and frozen rivulet, and drifted hollow, with here and there the top of a stone-wall peeping through the snow, or the more visible circle of a sheep-bught, we descended into the Hazel-Glen, and saw before us the solitary house of the dying Elder.

A gleam of days gone by came suddenly over my soul. The last time that I had been in this Glen was on a day of June, fifteen years before, a holiday, the birth-day of the king. A troop of laughing school-boys, headed by our benign Pastor, we danced over the sunny braes, and startled the linnets from their nests among the yellow broom. Austere as seemed to us the ELDER's Sabbath-face when sitting in the kirk, we school-boys knew that it had its week-day smiles —and we flew on the wings of joy to our annual Festival of curds and cream in the farm-house of that little sylvan world. We rejoiced in the flowers and the leaves of that long, that interminable summer-day;

its memory was with our boyish hearts from June to June; and the sound of that sweet name, "Hazel-Glen," often came upon us at our tasks, and brought too brightly into the school-room the pastoral imagery of that mirthful solitude.

As we now slowly approached the cottage, through a deep snow-drift, which the distress within had prevented the household from removing, we saw, peeping out from the door, brothers and sisters of our little guide, who quickly disappeared, and then their mother showed herself in their stead, expressing, by her raised eyes and arms folded across her breast, how thankful she was to see, at last, the Pastor beloved in joy and trusted in trouble.

Soon as the venerable Old Man dismounted from his horse, our active little guide led it away into the humble stable, and we entered the cottage. Not a sound was heard but the ticking of the clock. The matron, who had silently welcomed us at the door, led us, with suppressed sighs and a face stained with weeping, into her father's sick-room, which even in that time of sore distress was as orderly as if health had blessed the house. I could not help remarking some old china ornaments on the chimney-piece—and in the window was an ever-blowing rose-tree, that almost touched the lowly roof, and brightened that end of the apartment with its blossoms. There was something tasteful in the simple furniture; and it seemed as if grief could not deprive the hand of that matron

of its careful elegance. Sickness, almost hopeless sickness, lay there, surrounded with the same cheerful and beautiful objects which health had loved; and she, who had arranged and adorned the apartment in her happiness, still kept it from disorder and decay in her sorrow.

With a gentle hand she drew the curtain of the bed, and there, supported by pillows as white as the snow that lay without, reposed the Dying Elder. It was plain that the hand of God was upon him, and that his days on the earth were numbered.

He greeted his Minister with a faint smile, and a slight inclination of the head—for his daughter had so raised him on the pillows, that he was almost sitting up in his bed. It was easy to see that he knew himself to be dying, and that his soul was prepared for the great change;—yet, along with the solemn resignation of a Christian who had made his peace with God and his Saviour, there was blended on his white and sunken countenance an expression of habitual reverence for the minister of his faith—and I saw that he could not have died in peace without that comforter to pray by his death-bed.

A few words sufficed to tell who was the stranger—and the dying man, blessing me by name, held out to me his cold shrivelled hand in token of recognition. I took my seat at a small distance from the bed-side, and left a closer station for those who were more dear. The Pastor sat down near his head—and by the bed,

leaning on it with gentle hands, stood that matron, his daughter-in-law; a figure, that would have graced and sainted a higher dwelling, and whose native beauty was now more touching in its grief. But Religion upheld her whom nature was bowing down; not now for the first time were the lessons taught by her father to be put into practice, for I saw that she was clothed in deep mourning—and she behaved like the daughter of a man whose life had not been only irreproachable but lofty, with fear and hope fighting desperately but silently in the core of her pure and pious heart.

While we thus remained in silence, the beautiful boy, who, at the risk of his life, had brought the Minister of Religion to the bed-side of his beloved grandfather, softly and cautiously opened the door, and, with the hoar-frost yet unmelted on his bright glistering ringlets, walked up to the pillow, evidently no stranger there. He no longer sobbed—he no longer wept—for hope had risen strongly within his innocent heart, from the consciousness of love so fearlessly exerted, and from the presence of the Holy Man in whose prayers he trusted, as in the intercession of some superior and heavenly nature. There he stood, still as an image in his grandfather's eyes, that, in their dimness, fell upon him with delight. Yet, happy as was the trusting child, his heart was devoured by fear—and he looked as if one word might stir up the flood of tears that had subsided in his heart. As he crossed the dreary and dismal moors, he had thought of a

corpse, a shroud, and a grave; he had been in terror, lest death should strike in his absence the old man, with whose grey hairs he had so often played; but now he *saw* him alive, and felt that death was not able to tear him away from the clasps and links and fetters of his grandchild's embracing love.

"If the storm do not abate," said the sick man, after a pause, "it will be hard for my friends to carry me over the drifts to the kirk-yard." This sudden approach to the grave, struck, as with a bar of ice, the heart of the loving boy—and with a long deep sigh, he fell down with his face like ashes on the bed, while the old man's palsied right hand had just strength to lay itself upon his head. "Blessed be thou, my little Jamie, even for his own name's sake who died for us on the tree!" The mother, without terror, but with an averted face, lifted up her loving-hearted boy, now in a dead fainting-fit, and carried him into an adjoining room, where he soon revived: but that child and that old man were not to be separated; in vain was he asked to go to his brothers and sisters; pale, breathless, and shivering, he took his place as before, with eyes fixed on his grandfather's face, but neither weeping nor uttering a word. Terror had frozen up the blood of his heart; but his were now the only dry eyes in the room; and the Pastor himself wept, albeit the grief of fourscore is seldom vented in tears.

"God has been gracious to me, a sinner," said the dying man. "During thirty years that I have been

an Elder in your Kirk, never have I missed sitting there one Sabbath. When the mother of my children was taken from me—it was on a Tuesday she died—and on Saturday she was buried. We stood together when my Alice was let down into the narrow house made for all living. On the Sabbath I joined in the public worship of God—she commanded me to do so the night before she went away. I could not join in the psalm that Sabbath, for her voice was not in the throng. Her grave was covered up, and grass and flowers grew there; so was my heart; but Thou, whom, through the blood of Christ, I hope to see this night in Paradise, knowest, that from that hour to this day never have I forgotten Thee!"

The old man ceased speaking—and his grandchild, now able to endure the scene, for strong passion is its own support, glided softly to a little table, and bringing a cup in which a cordial had been mixed, held it in his small soft hands to his grandfather's lips. He drank, and then said, "Come closer to me, Jamie, and kiss me for thine own and thy father's sake;" and as the child fondly pressed his rosy lips on those of his grandfather, so white and withered, the tears fell over all the old man's face, and then trickled down on the golden head of the child at last sobbing in his bosom.

"Jamie, thy own father has forgotten thee in thy infancy, and me in my old age; but, Jamie, forget not thou thy father nor thy mother, for that thou knowest and feelest is the commandment of God."

The broken-hearted boy could give no reply. He had gradually stolen closer and closer unto the old loving man, and now was lying, worn out with sorrow, drenched and dissolved in tears, in his grandfather's bosom. His mother had sunk down on her knees, and hid her face with her hands. "Oh! if my husband knew but of this—he would never, never desert his dying father!" and I now knew that the Elder was praying on his death-bed for a disobedient and wicked son.

At this affecting time the minister took the Family-Bible on his knees, and said, "Let us sing to the praise and glory of God, part of the fifteenth Psalm," and he read, with a tremulous and broken voice, those beautiful verses:

Within thy tabernacle, Lord,
Who shall abide with thee?
And in thy high and holy hill
Who shall a dweller be?
The man that walketh uprightly,
And worketh righteousness,
And as he thinketh in his heart,
So doth he truth express.

The small congregation sung the noble hymn of the Psalmist to "Plaintive martyrs, worthy of the name." The dying man himself, ever and anon, joined in the holy music—and when it feebly died away on his quivering lips, he continued still to follow the tune with the motion of his withered hand, and eyes de-

voutly and humbly lifted up to Heaven. Nor was the sweet voice of his loving grandchild unheard; as if the strong fit of deadly passion had dissolved in the music, he sang with a sweet and silvery voice that to a passer by had seemed that of perfect happiness—a hymn sung in joy upon its knees by gladsome childhood before it flew out among the green hills, to quiet labour or gleesome play. As that sweetest voice came from the bosom of the old man, where the singer lay in affection, and blended with his own so tremulous, never had I felt so affectingly brought before me the beginning and the end of life, the cradle and the grave.

Ere the psalm was yet over, the door was opened, and a tall fine-looking man entered, but with a lowering and dark countenance, seemingly in sorrow, in misery, and remorse. Agitated, confounded, and awe-struck by the melancholy and dirge-like music, he sat down on a chair—and looked with a ghastly face towards his father's death-bed. When the psalm ceased, the Elder said with a solemn voice, "My son—thou art come in time to receive thy father's blessing. May the remembrance of what will happen in this room, before the morning again shine over the Hazel-Glen, win thee from the error of thy ways. Thou art here to witness the mercy of thy God and thy Saviour, whom thou hast forgotten."

The Minister looked, if not with a stern, yet with an upbraiding countenance, on the young man who

had not recovered his speech, and said, "William! for three years past your shadow has not darkened the door of the House of God. They who fear not the thunder, may tremble at the still small voice—now is the hour for repentance—that your father's spirit may carry up to Heaven tidings of a contrite soul saved from the company of sinners!"

The young man, with much effort, advanced to the bed-side, and at last found voice to say, "Father—I am not without the affections of nature—and I hurried home soon as I heard that the Minister had been seen riding towards our house. I hope that you will yet recover—and if I have ever made you unhappy, I ask your forgiveness—for though I may not think as you do on matters of religion, I have a human heart. Father! I may have been unkind, but I am not cruel. I ask your forgiveness."

"Come nearer to me, William; kneel down by the bed-side, and let my hand find the head of my beloved son—for blindness is coming fast upon me. Thou wert my first-born, and thou art my only living son. All thy brothers and sisters are lying in the churchyard, beside her whose sweet face thine own, William, did once so much resemble. Long wert thou the joy, the pride of my soul—aye, too much the pride, for there was not in all the parish such a man, such a son, as my own William. If thy heart has since been changed, God may inspire it again with right thoughts. Could I die for thy sake—could I purchase thy salvation

with the outpouring of thy father's blood—but this the Son of God has done for thee, who hast denied him! I have sorely wept for thee—aye, William, when there was none near me—even as David wept for Absalom—for thee, my son, my son!"

A long deep groan was the only reply; but the whole body of the kneeling man was convulsed; and it was easy to see his sufferings, his contrition, his remorse, and his despair. The Pastor said, with a sterner voice, and austerer countenance than were natural to him, "Know you whose hand is now lying on your rebellious head? But what signifies the word father to him who has denied God, the Father of us all?" "Oh! press him not so hardly," said the weeping wife, coming forward from a dark corner of the room, where she had tried to conceal herself in grief, fear, and shame; "spare, oh! spare my husband—he has ever been kind to me;" and with that she knelt down beside him, with her long, soft, white arms mournfully and affectionately laid across his neck. "Go thou, likewise, my sweet little Jamie," said the Elder, "go even out of my bosom, and kneel down beside thy father and thy mother, so that I may bless you all at once, and with one yearning prayer." The child did as that solemn voice commanded, and knelt down somewhat timidly by his father's side; nor did that unhappy man decline encircling with his arm the child too much neglected, but still dear to him as his

own blood, in spite of the deadening and debasing influence of infidelity.

"Put the Word of God into the hands of my son, and let him read aloud to his dying father the 25th, 26th, and 27th verses of the eleventh chapter of the Gospel according to St John." The Pastor went up to the kneelers, and, with a voice of pity, condolence, and pardon, said, "There was a time when none, William, could read the Scriptures better than couldst thou—can it be that the son of my friend hath forgotten the lessons of his youth?" He had not forgotten them—there was no need for the repentant sinner to lift up his eyes from the bed-side. The sacred stream of the Gospel had worn a channel in his heart, and the waters were again flowing. With a choked voice he said, "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

"That is not an unbeliever's voice," said the dying man triumphantly; nor, William, hast thou an unbeliever's heart. Say that thou believest in what thou hast now read, and thy father will die happy!" "I do believe; and as thou forgivest me, so may I be forgiven by my Father who is in heaven."

The Elder seemed like a man suddenly inspired with a new life. His faded eyes kindled—his pale cheeks glowed—his palsied hands seemed to wax strong—and his voice was clear as that of manhood in its prime. "Into thy hands, Oh God, I commit my spirit."—And so saying, he gently sunk back on his pillow; and I thought I heard a sigh. There was then a long deep silence, and the father, and mother and child, rose from their knees. The eyes of us all were turned towards the white placid face of the Figure now stretched in everlasting rest; and without lamentations, save the silent lamentations of the resigned soul, we stood around the DEATH-BED OF THE ELDER.

THE ELDER'S FUNERAL.



How beautiful to the eye and to the heart rise up, in a pastoral region, the green silent hills from the dissolving snow-wreaths that yet linger at their feet! A few warm sunny days, and a few breezy and melting nights, have seemed to create the sweet season of Spring out of the Winter's bleakest desolation. We can scarcely believe that such brightness of verdure could have been shrouded in the snow, blending itself, as it now does, so vividly with the deep blue of heaven. With the revival of nature our own souls feel restored. Happiness becomes milder—meeker—and richer in pensive thought; while sorrow catches a faint tinge of joy, and reposes itself on the quietness of earth's opening breast. Then is youth rejoicing—manhood sedate—and old age resigned. The child shakes his golden curls in his glee—he of riper life hails the coming year with temperate exultation, and the eye that has been touched with dimness, in the general spirit of delight forgets or fears not the shadows of the grave.

On such a vernal day as this did we, who had visited the Elder on his death-bed, walk together to his house in the Hazel-Glen, to accompany his body to the place of burial. On the night he died it seemed to be the dead of Winter. On the day he was buried it seemed to be the birth of Spring. The old Pastor and I were alone for a while as we pursued our path up the glen, by the banks of the little burn. It had cleared itself off from the melted snow, and ran so pellucid a race, that every stone and pebble was visible in its yellow channel. The willows, the alders, and the birches, the fairest and the earliest of our native hill trees, seemed almost tinged with a verdant light, as if they were budding; and beneath them, here and there, peeped out, as in the pleasure of new existence, the primrose lonely, or in little families and flocks. The bee had not yet ventured to leave his cell, yet the flowers reminded one of his murmur. A few insects were dancing in the air, and here and there some little moorland bird, touched at the heart with the warm sunny change, was piping his love-sweet song among the braes. It was just such a day as a grave meditative man, like him we were about to inter, would have chosen to walk over his farm in religious contentment with his lot. That was the thought that entered the Pastor's heart, as we paused to enjoy one brighter gleam of the sun in a little meadow-field of peculiar beauty. "This is the last day of the week—and on that day often did the Elder walk through this little happy

kingdom of his own, with some of his grandchildren beside and around him, and often his Bible in his hand. It is, you feel, a solitary place—all the vale is one seclusion—and often have its quiet bounds been a place of undisturbed meditation and prayer."

We now came in sight of the cottage and beyond it the termination of the Glen. There the high hills came sloping gently down; and a little waterfall, in the distance, gave animation to a scene of perfect repose. We were now joined by various small parties coming to the funeral through openings among the hills; all sedate, but none sad, and every greeting was that of kindness and peace. The Elder had died full of years; and there was no need why any one out of his own household should weep. A long life of piety had been beautifully closed; and, therefore, we were all going to commit the body to the earth, assured, as far as human beings may be so assured, that the soul was in Heaven. As the party increased on our approach to the house, there was even cheerfulness among us. We spoke of the early and bright promise of Spring—of the sorrows and the joys of other families—of marriages and births—of the new schoolmaster—of to-morrow's Sabbath. There was no topic of which, on any common occasion, it might have been fitting to speak, that did not now perhaps occupy for a few moments, some one or other of the group, till we found ourselves ascending the green sward before the cottage, and stood below the bare branches of

the sycamores. Then we were all silent, and, after a short pause, reverently entered into the house of death.

At the door the Son received us with a calm, humble, and untroubled face; and in his manner towards the old Minister, there was something that could not be misunderstood, expressing penitence, gratitude, and resignation. We all sat down in the large kitchen; and the Son decently received each person at the door, and showed him to his place. There were some old grey heads—more becoming grey—and many bright in manhood and youth. But the same solemn hush was over them all; and they sat all bound together in one uniting and assimilating spirit of devotion and faith. Wine and bread was to be sent round—but the Son [illegible] to the old Minister, who rose, lifted up his withered hand, and began a blessing and a prayer.

There was so much composure and stillness in the old man's attitude, and something so affecting in his voice, tremulous and broken, not in grief but age, that no sooner had he begun to pray, than every heart and every breath at once were hushed. All stood motionless, nor could one eye abstain from that placid and patriarchal countenance, with its closed eyes, and long silvery hair. There was nothing sad in his words, but they were all humble and solemn, and at times even joyful in the kindling spirit of piety and faith. He spoke of the dead man's goodness as imperfect in the eyes of his Great Judge, but such, as we were taught, might lead, through intercession, to the king-

dom of heaven. Might the blessing of God, he prayed, which had so long rested on the head now coffined, not forsake that of him who was now to be the father of this house. There was more—more joy, we were told, in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons which need no repentance. Fervently, too, and tenderly, did the old man pray for her, in her silent chamber, who had lost so kind a parent, and for all the little children round her knees. Nor did he end his prayer without some allusion to his own grey hairs, and to the approaching day on which many then present would attend his burial.

Just as he ceased to speak, one solitary stifled sob was heard, and all eyes turned kindly round to a little boy who was standing by the side of the Elder's Son. Restored once more to his own father's love, his heart had been insensibly filled with peace since the old man's death. The returning tenderness of the living came in place of that of the dead, and the child yearned towards his father now with a stronger affection, relieved at last from all his fear. He had been suffered to sit an hour each day beside the bed on which his grandfather lay shrouded, and he had got reconciled to the cold, but silent and happy looks of death. His mother and his Bible told him to obey God without repining in all things; and the child did so with perfect simplicity. One sob had found its way at the close of that pathetic prayer; but the tears that bathed his glistening cheeks were far different from those that, on the

day and night of his grandfather's decease, had burst from the agony of a breaking heart. The old Minister laid his hand silently upon his golden head—there was a momentary murmur of kindness and pity over the room—the child was pacified—and again all was repose and peace.

A sober voice said that all was ready, and the son and the minister led the way reverently out into the open air. The bier stood before the door, and was lifted slowly up with its sable pall. Silently each mourner took his place. The sun was shining pleasantly, and a gentle breeze passing through the sycamore, shook down the glittering rain-drops upon the funeral velvet. The small procession, with an instinctive spirit, began to move along; and as I cast up my eyes to take a farewell look of that beautiful dwelling, now finally left by him who so long had blessed it, I saw at the half open lattice of the little bed-room window above, the pale weeping face of that stainless matron, who was taking her last passionate farewell of the mortal remains of her father, now slowly receding from her to the quiet field of graves.

We proceeded along the edges of the hills, and along the meadow-fields, crossed the old wooden-bridge over the burn, now widening in its course to the plain, and in an hour of pensive silence, or pleasant talk, we found ourselves entering, in a closer body, the little gate-way of the church-yard. To the tolling of the bell we moved across the green mounds, and arranged

ourselves, according to the plan and order which our feelings suggested, around the bier and its natural supporters. There was no delay. In a few minutes the Elder was laid among the mould of his forefathers, in their long-ago chosen spot of rest. One by one the people dropt away, and none were left by the new made grave but the Son and his little Boy, the Pastor and myself. As yet nothing was said, and in that pause I looked around me, over the sweet burial-ground.

Each tombstone and grave over which I had often walked in boyhood, arose in my memory, as I looked stedfastly upon their long-forgotten inscriptions; and many had since then been erected. The whole character of the place was still simple and unostentatious, but from the abodes of the dead, I could see that there had been an improvement in the condition of the living. There was a taste visible in their decorations, not without much of native feeling, and occasionally something even of native grace. If there was any other inscription than the name and age of the poor inhabitants below, it was in general some short text of Scripture; for it is most pleasant and soothing to the pious mind, when bereaved of friends, to commemorate them on earth by some touching expression taken from that Book, which reveals to them a life in Heaven.

There is a sort of gradation, a scale of forgetfulness, in a country church-yard, where the processes of na-

ture are suffered to go on over the green place of burial, that is extremely affecting in the contemplation. The soul goes from the grave just covered up, to that which seems scarcely joined together, on and on to those folded and bound by the undisturbed verdure of many many unremembered years. It then glides at last into nooks and corners where the ground seems perfectly calm and waveless, utter oblivion having smoothed the earth over the long mouldered bones. Tombstones on which the inscriptions are hidden in green obliteration, or that are mouldering, or falling to a side, are close to others which last week were brushed by the chisel:—constant renovation and constant decay—vains attempts to adhere to memory—and oblivion now baffled and now triumphant, smiling among all the memorials of human affection, as they keep continually crumbling away into the world of undistinguishable dust and ashes.

The church-yard, to the inhabitants of a rural parish, is the place to which, as they grow older, all their thoughts and feelings turn. The young take a look of it every Sabbath-Day, not always perhaps a careless look, but carry away from it, unconsciously, many salutary impressions. What is more pleasant than the meeting of a rural congregation in the church-yard before the minister appears? What is there to shudder at in lying down, sooner or later, in such a peaceful and sacred place, to be spoken of frequently on Sabbath among the groupes of which we used to be one, and

our low burial-spot to be visited, at such times, as long as there remains on earth any one to whom our face was dear! To those who mix in the strife and dangers of the world, the place is felt to be uncertain wherein they may finally lie at rest. The soldier—the sailor—the traveller, can only see some dim grave dug for him, when he dies, in some place obscure—nameless—and unfixed to imagination. All he feels is that his burial will be—on earth—or in the sea. But the peaceful dwellers who cultivate their paternal acres, or tilling at least the same small spot of soil, shift only from a cottage on the hillside to one on the plain, still within the bounds of one quiet parish,—they look to lay their bones at last in the burial-place of the kirk in which they were baptized, and with them it almost literally is but a step from the cradle to the grave.

Such were the thoughts that calmly followed each other in my reverie, as I stood beside the Elder's grave, and the trodden grass was again lifting up its blades from the pressure of many feet, now all—but a few—departed. What a simple burial had it been! Dust was consigned to dust—no more. Bare, naked, simple, and austere, 'is in Scotland the service of the grave. It is left to the soul itself to consecrate, by its passion, the mould over which tears, but no words, are poured. Surely there is a beauty in this; for the heart is left unto its own sorrow—according as it is a friend—a brother—a parent—or a child, that is cover-

ed up from our eyes. Yet call not other rites, however different from this, less beautiful or pathetic. For willingly does the soul connect its grief with any consecrated ritual of the dead. Sound or silence—music—hymns—psalms—sable garments, or raiment white as snow, all become holy symbols of the soul's affection; nor is it for any man to say which is the most natural, which is the best of the thousand shows and expressions, and testimonies of sorrow, resignation, and love, by which mortal beings would seek to express their souls when one of their brethren has returned to his parent dust.

My mind was recalled from all these sad yet not unpleasant fancies by a deep groan, and I beheld the Elder's son fling himself down upon the grave, and kiss it passionately, imploring pardon from God. "I distressed my father's heart in his old age—I repented—and received thy forgiveness even on thy death-bed! But how may I be assured that God will forgive me for having so sinned against my old grey-headed father, when his limbs were weak and his eye-sight dim!" The old Minister stood at the head of the grave, without speaking a word, with his solemn and pitiful eyes fixed upon the prostrate and contrite man. His sin had been great, and tears that till now had, on this day at least, been compressed within his heart by the presence of so many of his friends, now poured down upon the sod as if they would have found their way to the very body of his

father. Neither of us offered to lift him up, for we felt awed by the rueful passion of his love, his remorse, and his penitence; and nature, we felt, ought to have her way. " Fear not, my son"—at length said the old man, in a gentle voice—" fear not, my son, but that you are already forgiven. Dost thou not feel pardon within thy contrite spirit?" He rose up from his knees with a faint smile, while the Minister, with his white head yet uncovered, held his hands over him as in benediction; and that beautiful and loving child, who had been standing in a fit of weeping terror at his father's agony, now came up to him, and kissed his cheek—holding in his little hand a few faded primroses which he had unconsciously gathered together as they lay on the turf of his grandfather's grave.

THE TWINS.



The Kirk of Auchindown stands, with its Burial-ground, on a little green hill, surrounded by an irregular and straggling village, or rather about an hundred hamlets clustering round it, with their fields and gardens. A few of these gardens come close up to the church-yard wall, and in Spring-time, many of the fruit-trees hang rich and beautiful over the adjacent graves. The voices and the laughter of the children at play on the green before the parish-school, or their composed murmur when at their various lessons together in the room, may be distinctly heard all over the burial-ground,—so may the song of the maidens going to the well;—while all around, the singing of birds is thick and hurried; and a small rivulet, as if brought there to be an emblem of passing time, glides away beneath the mossy wall, murmuring continually a dreamlike tune around the dwellings of the dead.

In the quiet of the evening, after the Elder's Funeral, my venerable friend and father took me with him into the church-yard. We walked to the eastern cor-

ner, where, as we approached, I saw a Monument standing almost by itself, and even at that distance, appearing to be of a somewhat different character from any other over all the burial-ground. And now we stood close to, and before it.

It was a low Monument, of the purest white marble, simple, but perfectly elegant and graceful withal, and upon its unadorned slab lay the sculptured images of two Children asleep in each other's arms. All round it was a small piece of greenest ground, without the protection of any rail, but obviously belonging to the Monument. It shone, without offending them, among the simpler or ruder burial beds round about it, and although the costliness of the materials, the affecting beauty of the design, and the delicacy of its execution, all showed that there slept the offspring neither of the poor nor low in life, yet so meekly and sadly did it lift up its unstained little walls, and so well did its unusual elegance meet and blend with the character of the common tombs, that no heart could see it without sympathy, and without owning that it was a pathetic ornament of a place filled with the ruder memorials of the very humblest dead.

"There lie two of the sweetest Children," said the old Man, "that ever delighted a mother's soul—two English boys—scions of a noble stem. They were of a decayed family of high lineage; and had they died in their own country a hundred years ago, they would

have been let down into a vault with all the pomp of religion. Methinks, fair flowers, they are now sleeping as meetly here.

"Six years ago I was an old man, and wished to have silence and stillness in my house, that my communion with Him before whom I expected every day to be called might be undisturbed. Accordingly my Manse, that used to ring with boyish glee, was now quiet; when a Lady, elegant, graceful, beautiful, young, and a widow, came to my dwelling, and her soft, sweet, silver voice told me that she was from England. She was the relict of an officer slain in war, and having heard a dear friend of her husband's, who had lived in my house, speak of his happy and innocent time here, she earnestly requested me to receive beneath my roof her two sons. She herself lived with the bed-ridden mother of her dead husband; and anxious for the growing minds of her boys, she sought to commit them for a short time to my care. They and their mother soon won an old man's heart, and I could say nothing in opposition to her request but that I was upwards of threescore and ten years. But I am living still—and that is their Monument."

We sat down, at these words, on the sloping headstone of a grave just opposite to this little beautiful structure, and, without entreaty, and as if to bring back upon his heart the delight of old tender remembrances, the venerable Man continued fervently thus to speak.

"The Lady left them with me in the Manse—surely the two most beautiful and engaging creatures that ever died in youth. They were Twins. Like were they unto each other, as two bright-plumaged doves of one colour, or two flowers with the same blossom and the same leaves. They were dressed alike, and whatever they wore, in that did they seem more especially beautiful. Their hair was the same, a bright auburn—their voices were as one—so that the Twins were inseparable in my love, whether I beheld them, or my dim eyes were closed. From the first hour they were left alone with me, and without their mother, in the Manse, did I begin to love them, nor were they slow in returning an old man's affection. They stole up to my side, and submitted their smooth, glossy, leaning heads to my withered and trembling hand, nor for a while could I tell, as the sweet beings came gliding gladsomely near me, which was Edward and which was Henry; and often did they, in loving playfulness, try to deceive my loving heart. But they could not defraud each other of my tenderness; for whatever the one received, that was ready to be bestowed upon the other. To love the one more than the other was impossible.

"Sweet creatures! it was not long before I learned to distinguish them. That which seemed to me, at first, so perfectly the same, soon unfolded itself out into many delightful varieties, and then I wondered how I ever could have mistaken them for one another.

Different shadows played upon their hair; that of the one being silky and smooth, and of the other slightly curled at the edges, and clustering thickly when he flung his locks back in playfulness or joy. His eyes, though of a hazle-hue like that of his brother, were considerably lighter, and a smile seemed native there; while those of the other seemed almost dark, and fitter for the mist of tears. Dimples marked the cheeks of the one, but those of the other were paler and smooth. Their voices too, when I listened to them and knew their character, had a faint fluctuating difference of inflection and tone—like the same instrument blown upon with a somewhat stronger or weaker breath. Their very laugh grew to be different unto my ear—that of the one freer and more frequent, that of the other mild in its utmost glee. And they had not been many days in the Manse, before I knew in a moment, dim as my eyes had long been, the soft, timid, stealing step of Edward, from the dancing and fearless motion of Henry Howard."

Here the old man paused, not as it seemed from any fatigue in speaking so long, but as if to indulge more profoundly in his remembrance of the children whom he had so tenderly loved. He fixed his dim eyes on their sculptured images with as fond an expression, as if they had been alive and had lain down there to sleep—and when, without looking on me whom he felt to have been listening with quiet attention, he again began to

speak, it was partly to tell me the tale of these fair sleepers, and partly to give vent to his loving grief.

"All strangers, even many who thought they knew them well, were pleasantly perplexed with the faces and figures of the bright English Twins. The poor beggars, as they went their rounds, blessed them, without knowing whether it was Edward or Henry that had bestowed his alms. The mother of the cottage children with whom they played confused their images in her loving heart, as she named them in her prayers. When only one was present, it gave a start of strange delight to them who did not know the Twins, to see another creature so beautifully the same come gliding in upon them, and join his brother in a share of their suddenly bestowed affection.

"They soon came to love, with all their hearts, the place wherein they had their new habitation. Not even in their own merry England had their young eyes ever seen brighter green fields,—trees more umbrageous—or, perhaps, even rural gardens more flowery and blossoming, than those of this Scottish village. They had lived, indeed, mostly in a town; and, in the midst of the freshness and balminess of the country, they became happier and more gleesome—it was said by many, even more beautiful. The affectionate creatures did not forget their mother. Alternately did they write to her every week—and every week did one or other receive from her a letter, in which the sweetest maternal feelings were traced in

small delicate lines, that bespoke the hand of an accomplished lady. Their education had not been neglected; and they learnt every thing they were taught with a surprising quickness and docility—alike amiable and intelligent. Morning and evening, too, did they kneel down with clasped hands—these lovely Twins—even at my feet, and resting on my knees; and melodiously did they murmur together the hymns which their mother had taught them, and passages selected from the Scriptures,—many of which are in the affecting, beautiful, and sublime ritual of the English Church. And always, the last thing they did, before going to sleep in each other's arms, was to look at their mother's picture, and to kiss it with fond kisses, and many an endearing name."

Just then, two birds alighted softly on the white marble Monument, and began to trim their plumes. They were doves from their nest in the belfry of the spire, from which a low, deep, plaintive murmuring was now heard to come, deepening the profound silence of the burial-ground. The two bright birds walked about for a few minutes round the images of the children, or stood quietly at their feet; and then, clapping their wings, flew up and disappeared. The incident, though, at any other time, common and uninteresting, had a strange effect upon my heart now, and seemed dimly emblematic of the innocence and beauty of the inhabitants of that tomb, and of the flight of their sinless souls to heaven.

"One evening in early Autumn, (they had been with me from the middle of May,) Edward, the elder, complained, on going to bed, of a sore throat, and I proposed that his brother should sleep in another bed. I saw them myself, accordingly, in separate places of repose. But on going, about an hour afterwards, into their room, there I found them locked, as usual, in each other's arms—face to face—and their innocent breath mingling from lips that nearly touched. I could not find heart to separate them, nor could I have done so, without awaking Edward. His cheeks were red and flushed, and his sleep broken and full of starts. Early in the morning I was at their bed-side. Henry was lying apart from his brother, looking at him with a tearful face, and his little arm laid so as to touch his bosom. Edward was unable to rise—his throat was painful, his pulse high, and his heart sick. Before evening he became slightly delirious, and his illnesss was evidently a fever of a dangerous and malignant kind. He was, I told you, a bold and gladsome child, when not at his tasks, dancing and singing almost every hour; but the fever quickly subdued his spirit, the shivering fits made him weep and wail, and rueful, indeed, was the change which a single night and day had brought forth.

"His brother seemed to be afraid more than children usually are of sickness, which they are always slow to link with the thought of death. But he told me, weeping, that his eldest brother had died of a fe-

ver, and that his mother was always alarmed about that disease. "Did I think," asked he, with wild eyes, and a palpitating heart, "did I think that Edward was going to die?" I looked at the affectionate child, and taking him to my bosom, I felt that his own blood was beating but too quickly, and that fatal had been that night's sleeping embrace in his brother's bosom. The fever had tainted his sweet veins also—and I had soon to lay him shivering on his bed. In another day he too was delirious—and too plainly chasing his brother into the grave.

"Never in the purest hours of their healthful happiness had their innocent natures seemed to me more beautiful than now in their delirium. As it increased, all vague fears of dying left their souls, and they kept talking as if to each other of every thing here or in England that was pleasant and interesting. Now and then they murmured the names of persons of whom I had not formerly heard them speak—friends who had been kind to them before I had known of their existence, and servants in their mother's or their father's household. Of their mother they spoke to themselves, though necessarily kept apart, almost in the very same words, expecting a visit from her at the Manse, and then putting out their little hands to embrace her. All their innocent plays were acted over and over again on the bed of death. They were looking into the nests of the little singing birds, which they never injured, in the hedgerows and the woods. And the

last intelligible words that I heard Edward utter were these—" Let us go, brother, to the church-yard, and lie down on the daisies among the little green mounds!"

" They both died within an hour of each other. I lifted up Henry, when I saw he too was dead, and laid him down beside his brother. There lay the Twins, and had their mother at that hour come into the room, she would have been thankful to see that sight, for she would have thought that her children were in a calm and refreshing sleep!"

My eyes were fixed upon the sculptured images of the dead—lying side by side, with their faces up to heaven, their little hands folded as in prayer upon their bosoms, and their eyelids closed. The old man drew a sigh almost like a sob, and wept. They had been intrusted to his care—they had come smiling from another land—for one summer they were happy—and then disappeared, like the other fading flowers, from the earth. I wished that the old man would cease his touching narrative—both for his sake and my own. So I rose, and walked up quite close to the Monument, inspecting the spirit of its design, and marking the finish of its execution. But he called me to him, and requesting me to resume my seat beside him on the gravestone, he thus continued.

" I had written to their mother in England that her children were in extreme danger, but it was not possible that she could arrive in time to see them die, not even to see them buried. Decay was fast preying upon

them, and the beauty of death was beginning to disappear. So we could not wait the arrival of their mother, and their grave was made. Even the old grey-headed sexton wept, for in this case of mortality there was something to break in upon the ordinary tenor of his thoughts, and to stir up in his heart feelings that he could not have known existed there. There was sadness indeed over all the parish for the fair English Twins, who had come to live in the Manse after all the other boys had left it, and who, as they were the last, so were they the loveliest of all my flock. The very sound or accent of their southern voices, so pretty and engaging to our ears in the simplicity of childhood, had won many a heart, and touched, too, the imaginations of many with a new delight; and therefore, on the morning when they were buried, it may be said there was here a fast-day of grief.

"The dead children were English—in England had all their ancestors been born; and I knew, from the little I had seen of the mother, that though she had brought her mind to confide her children to the care of a Scottish Minister in their tender infancy, she was attached truly and deeply to the ordinances of her own Church. I felt that it would be accordant with her feelings, and that afterwards she would have satisfaction in the thought, that they should be buried according to the form of the English funeral-service. I communicated this wish to an Episcopalian Clergyman in the City, and he came to my house. He arranged

the funeral, as far as possible in the circumstances, according to that service; and although, no doubt, there was a feeling of curiosity mingled in many minds with the tenderness and awe which that touching and solemn ceremonial awakened, yet it was witnessed, not only without any feelings of repugnance or scorn, but, I may in truth say, with a rational sympathy, and with all the devout emotions embodied in language so scriptural and true to nature.

"The bier was carried slowly aloft upon men's shoulders, towards the church-yard gate. I myself walked at their little heads. Some of the neighbouring gentry—my own domestics—a few neighbours—and some of the school-children, formed the procession. The latter, walking before the coffin, continued singing a funeral psalm all the way till we reached the church-yard gate. It was a still gentle autumnal day, and now and then a withered leaf came rustling across the path of the weeping choristers. To us, to whom that dirge-like strain was new, all seemed like a pensive, and mournful, and holy dream.

"The Clergyman met the bier at the gate, and preceded it into the Kirk. It was then laid down—and while all knelt—I keeping my place at the heads of the sweet boys—he read, beautifully, affectingly, and solemnly,—a portion of the funeral service. The children had been beloved and admired, while alive, as the English Twins, and so had they always been called; and that feeling of their having belonged, as it

were, to another country, not only justified but made pathetic to all now assembled upon their knees, the ritual employed by that Church to which they, and their parents, and all their ancestors, had belonged. A sighing—and a sobbing too, was heard over the silence of my Kirk, when the Clergyman repeated these words, " As soon as thou scatterest them, they are even as a sleep, and fade away suddenly like the grass.

" In the morning it is green and groweth up: but in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered."

While the old man was thus describing their burial, the clock in the steeple struck, and he paused a moment at the solemn sound. Soon as it had slowly told the hour of advancing evening, he arose from the gravestone, as if his mind sought a relief from the weight of tenderness, in a change of bodily position. We stood together facing the little Monument—and his narrative was soon brought to a close.

" We were now all collected together round the grave. The silence of yesterday, at the Elder's Funeral, was it not felt by you to be agreeable to all our natural feelings? So were the words which were now spoken over these Children. The whole ceremony was different, but it touched the very same feelings in our hearts. It lent an expression, to what, in that other case, was willing to be silent. There was a sweet, a sad, and a mournful consistency in the

ritual of death, from the moment we receded from the door of the Manse, accompanied by the music of that dirge sung by the clear tremulous voices of the young and innocent, till we entered the Kirk with the coffin to the sound of the priest's chaunted verses from Job and St John, during the time when we knelt round the dead children in the House of God, also during our procession thence to the grave-side, still attended with chaunting, or reciting, or responding voices; and, finally, at the moment of dropping of a piece of earth upon the coffin, (it was from my own hand,) while the priest said, "We commit their bodies to the ground, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Next day their Mother arrived at the Manse. She knew, before she came, that her children were dead and buried. It is true that she wept; and at the first sight of their grave, for they both lay in one coffin, her grief was passionate and bitter. But that fit soon passed away. Her tears were tears of pity for them, but as for herself, she hoped that she was soon to see them in Heaven. Her face pale, yet flushed—her eyes hollow, yet bright, and a general languor and lassitude over her whole frame, all told that she was in the first stage of a consumption. This she knew and was happy. But other duties called her back to England, for the short remainder of her life. She herself drew the design of that Monument with her

own hand, and left it with me when she went away. I soon heard of her death. Her husband lies buried near Grenada, in Spain; she lies in the chancel of the Cathedral of Salisbury, in England; and there sleep her Twins in the little burial-ground of Auchindown, a Scottish Parish.

THE POOR SCHOLAR.



The vernal weather, that had come so early in the year, as to induce a fear that it would not be lasting, seemed, contrary to that foreboding of change, to become every day more mild and genial; and the spirit of beauty, that had at first ventured out over the bosom of the earth with timid footsteps, was now blending itself more boldly with the deep verdure of the ground, and the life of the budding trees. Something in the air, and in the great, wide, blue, bending arch of the unclouded sky, called upon the heart to come forth from the seclusion of parlour or study; and partake of the cheerfulness of nature.

We had made some short excursions together up the lonely glens, and over the moors, and also through the more thickly inhabited field-farms of his Parish, and now the old Minister proposed that we should pay a visit to a solitary Hut near the head of a dell, which, although not very remote from the Manse, we had not yet seen. And I was anxious that we should do so, as, from his conversation, I understood that we should

see there a family—if so a widow and her one son could be called—that would repay us by the interest we could not fail to feel in their character, for the time and toil spent on reaching their secluded and guarded dwelling.

"The poor widow woman," said the minister, "who lives in the Hut called Braehead, has as noble a soul as ever tenanted a human bosom. One earthly hope alone has she now—but I fear it never will be fulfilled. She is the widow of a common cottar who lived and died in the Hut which she and her son now inhabit. Her husband was a man of little education, but intelligent, even ingenious, simple, laborious, and pious. His duties lay all within a narrow circle, and his temptations, it may be said, were few. Such as they were, he discharged the one and withstood the other. Nor is there any reason to think, that, had they both been greater, he would have been found wanting. He was contented with meal and water all his days; and so fond of work, that he seemed to love the summer chiefly for the length of its labouring days. He had a slight genius for mechanics; and, during the long winter evenings, he made many articles of curious workmanship, the sale of which added a little to the earnings of his severer toil. The same love of industry excited him from morning to night; but he had also stronger, tenderer, and dearer motives; for if his wife and their one pretty boy should outlive him, he hoped, that, though left poor, they

would not be left in penury, but enabled to lead, without any additional hardships, the usual life, at least, of the widow and the orphans of honest hard-working men. Few thought much about Abraham Blane while he lived, except that he was an industrious and blameless man; but, on his death, it was felt that there had been something far more valuable in his character; and now I myself, who knew him well, was pleasingly surprised to know that he had left his widow and boy a small independence. Then the memory of his long summer days, and long winter nights, all ceaselessly employed in some kind of manual labour, dignified the lowly and stedfast virtue of the unpretending and conscientious man.

"The widow of this humble-hearted and simple-minded man, whom we shall this forenoon visit, you will remember, perhaps, although then neither she nor her husband were much known in the parish, as the wife of the basket-maker. Her father had been a clergyman—but his stipend was one of the smallest in Scotland, and he died in extreme poverty. This, his only daughter, who had many fine feelings and deep thoughts in her young innocent and simple heart, was forced to become a menial servant in a farm house. There subduing her heart to her situation, she married that inoffensive and good man; and all her life has been—maid, wife, and widow,—the humblest among the humble. But you shall soon have an opportunity of seeing what sense, what feeling,

what knowledge, and what piety, may all live together, without their owner suspecting them, in the soul of the lonely widow of a Scottish cottar; for except that she is pious, she thinks not that she possesses any other treasure; and even her piety she regards, like a true Christian, as a gift bestowed.

"But well worthy of esteem, and, to speak in the language of this world's fancies, of admiration, as you will think this poor solitary widow, perhaps you will think such feelings bestowed even more deservedly on her only son. He is now a boy only of sixteen years of age, but, in my limited experience of life, never knew I such another. From his veriest infancy he showed a singular capacity for learning; at seven years of age he could read, write, and was even an arithmetician. He seized upon books with the same avidity with which children, in general, seize upon playthings. He soon caught glimmerings of the meaning even of other languages; and, before he was ten years old, there were in his mind clear dawnings of the scholar, and indications not to be doubted of genius and intellectual power. His father was dead—but his mother, who was no common woman, however common her lot, saw with pure delight, and with strong maternal pride, that God had given her an extraordinary child to bless her solitary hut. She vowed to dedicate him to the ministry, and that all her husband had left should be spent upon him, to the last farthing, to qualify him to be a preacher of God's word. Such ambi-

tion, if sometimes misplaced, is almost always necessarily honourable. Here it was justified by the excelling talents of the boy—by his zeal for knowledge—which was like a fever in his blood—and by a childish piety, of which the simple, and eloquent, and beautiful expression has more than once made me shed tears. But let us leave the manse, and walk to Braehead. The sunshine is precious at this early season; let us enjoy it while it smiles!"

We crossed a few fields—a few coppice woods—an extensive sheep pasture, and then found ourselves on the edge of a moorland. Keeping the shelving heather ridge of hills above us, we gently descended into a narrow rushy glen, without any thing that could be called a stream, but here and there crossed and intersected by various runlets. Soon all cultivation ceased, and no houses were to be seen. Had the glen been a long one, it would have seemed desolate, but on turning round a little green mount that ran almost across it, we saw at once an end to our walk, and one Hut, with a peat-stack close to it, and one or two elder, or, as we call them in Scotland, bourtrie-bushes, at the low gable-end. A little smoke seemed to tinge the air over the roof uncertainly—but except in that, there was nothing to tell that the hut was inhabited. A few sheep lying near it, and a single cow of the small hill-breed, seemed to appertain to the hut, and a circular wall behind it apparently enclosed a garden. We sat down together on one of those large mossy stones that often

lie among the smooth green pastoral hills, like the relics of some building utterly decayed—and my venerable friend, whose solemn voice was indeed pleasant in this quiet solitude, continued the simple history of the Poor Scholar.

" At school he soon outstripped all the other boys, but no desire of superiority over his companions seemed to actuate him—it was the pure native love of knowledge. Gentle as a lamb, but happy as a lark, the very wildest of them all loved Isaac Blane. He procured a Hebrew Bible and a Greek Testament, both of which he taught himself to read. It was more than affecting—it was sublime and awful to see the solitary boy sitting by himself on the braes shedding tears over the mysteries of the Christian faith. His mother's heart burned within her towards her son; and if it was pride, you will allow that was pride of a divine origin. She appeared with him in the kirk every Sabbath, dressed not ostentatiously, but still in a way that showed she intended him not for a life of manual labour. Perhaps at first some half thought that she was too proud of him; but that was a suggestion not to be cherished, for all acknowledged that he was sure to prove an honour to the parish in which he was born. She often brought him to the Manse, and earth did not contain a happier creature than her, when her boy answered all my questions, and modestly made his own simple, yet wise remarks on the sa-

cred subjects gradually unfolding before his understanding and his heart.

"Before he was twelve years of age he went to College—and his mother accompanied him to pass the winter in the city. Two small rooms she took near the Cathedral, and while he was at the classes, or reading alone, she was not idle, but strove to make a small sum to help to defray their winter expences. To her that retired cell was a heaven when she looked upon her pious and studious boy. His genius was soon conspicuous; for four winters he pursued his studies in the University—returning always in summer to this hut, the door of which during their absence was closed. He made many friends, and frequently, during the three last summers, visitors came to pass a day at Braehead, in a rank of life far above his own. But in Scotland, thank God, talent, and learning, and genius, and virtue, when found in the poorest hut, go not without their admiration and their reward. Young as he is, he has had pupils of his own—his mother's little property has not been lessened at this hour by his education—and besides contributing to the support of her and himself, he has brought neater furniture into that lonely Hut, and there has he a library, limited in the number but rich in the choice of books, such as contain food for years of silent thought to the Poor Scholar—if years indeed are to be his on earth."

We rose to proceed onwards to the Hut, across one

smooth level of greenest herbage, and up one intervening knowe a little lower than the mount on which it stood. Why, thought I, has the old Man always spoken of the Poor Scholar, as if he had been speaking of one now dead? Can it be, from the hints he has dropped, that this youth, so richly endowed, is under the doom of death, and the fountain of all those clear and fresh gushing thoughts about to be sealed? I asked, as we walked along, if Isaac Blane seemed marked out to be one of those sweet flowers "no sooner blown than blasted," and who perish away like the creatures of a dream? The old Man made answer that it was even so—that he had been unable to attend College last winter—and that it was to be feared he was now far advanced in a hopeless decline. Simple is he still as a very child—but with a sublime sense of duty to God and man—of profound affection and humanity never to be appeased towards all the brethren of our race. Each month—each week—each day has seemed visibly to bring him new stores of silent feeling and thought—and even now, boy as he is, he is fit for the Ministry. But he has no hopes of living to that day—nor have I. The deep spirit of his piety is now blended with a sure prescience of an early death. Expect, therefore, to see him pale—emaciated—and sitting in the hut like a beautiful and blessed ghost."

We entered the Hut, but no one was in the room. The clock ticked solitarily—and on a table, beside a

nearly extinguished peat fire, lay the open Bible, and a small volume, which, on lifting it up, I found to be a Greek Testament. "They have gone out to walk, or to sit down for an hour in the warm sunshine," said the old Man.—"Let us sit down and wait their return. It will not be long." A long, low sigh was heard in the silence, proceeding, as it seemed, from a small room adjoining that in which we were sitting, and of which the door was left half-open. The Minister looked into that room, and, after a long earnest gaze, stept softly back to me again, with a solemn face, and taking me by the hand, whispered to me to come with him to that door, which he gently moved. On a low bed lay the Poor Scholar, dressed as he had been for the day, stretched out in a stillness too motionless and profound for sleep, and with his fixed face up to heaven. We saw that he was dead. His mother was kneeling, with her face on the bed, and covered with both her hands. Then she lifted up her eyes and said, "O Merciful Redeemer, who wrought that miracle on the child of the Widow of Nain, comfort me, comfort me, in this my sore distress! I know that my Son is never to rise again until the great Judgment-day. But not the less do I bless thy holy name—for thou didst die to save us sinners!"

She arose from her knees, and, still blind to every other object, went up to his breast. "I thought thee lovelier, when alive, than any of the sons of the child-

ren of men—but that smile is beyond the power of a mother's heart to sustain." And stooping down, she kissed his lips, and cheeks, and eyes, and forehead, with a hundred soft, streaming, and murmuring kisses, and then stood up in her solitary hut, alone and childless, with a long mortal sigh, in which all earthly feelings seemed breathed out, and all earthly ties broken. Her eyes wandered towards the door, and fixed themselves with a ghastly and unconscious gaze for a few moments on the grey locks and withered countenance of the old holy Man, bent towards her with a pitying and benignant air, and stooped, too, in the posture of devotion. She soon recognized the best friend of her Son, and leaving the bed on which his body lay, she came out into the room, and said, "You have come to me at a time when your presence was sorely needed. Had you been here but a few minutes sooner, you would have seen my Isaac die!"

Unconsciously we were all seated; and the Widow turning fervently to her venerated friend, said, "He was reading the Bible—he felt faint—and said feebly, "Mother, attend me to my bed, and when I lie down, put your arm over my breast and kiss me." I did just as he told me; and on wiping away a tear or two vainly shed by me on my dear boy's face, I saw that his eyes, though open, moved not, and that the lids were fixed. He had gone to another world. See—Sir! there is the Bible lying open at the place he was

reading—God preserve my soul from repining—only a few few minutes ago."

The Minister took the Bible on his knees, and laying his right hand, without selection, on part of one of the pages that lay open, he read aloud the following verses:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

The Mother's heart seemed to be deeply blest for a while by these words. She gave a grateful smile to the old Man, and sat silent, moving her lips. At length she again broke forth:

"Oh! Death, whatever may have been our thoughts or fears, ever comes unexpectedly at last! My son often—often told me, that he was dying, and I saw that it was so ever since Christmas. But how could I prevent hope from entering my heart? His sweet happy voice—the calmness of his prayers—his smiles, that never left his face whenever he looked or spoke to me—his studies, still pursued as anxiously as ever—the interest he took in any little incident of our retired life—all forced me to believe at times that he was not yet destined to die. But why think on all these things now? Yes! I will always think of them, till I join him and my husband in Heaven!"

It seemed now as if the Widow had only noticed me for the first time. Her soul had been so engrossed

with its passion of grief, and with the felt sympathy and compassion of my venerable friend. She asked me if I had known her son; and I answered, that if I had, I could not have sat there so composedly, but that I was no stranger to his incomparable excellence, and felt indeed for her grievous loss. She listened to my words, but did not seem to hear them, and once more addressed the old Man. "He suffered much sickness, my poor boy. For although it was a consumption, that is not always an easy death. But soon as the sickness and the racking pain gave way to our united prayers, God and our Saviour made us happy, and sure he spake then as never mortal spake, kindling into a happiness that was beautiful to see, when I beheld his face marked by dissolution, and knew even in those inspired moments, for I can call them nothing else, that ere long the dust was to lie on those lips now flowing over with heavenly music!"

We sat for some hours in the Widow's Hut, and the Minister several times prayed with her, at her own request. On rising to depart, he said that he would send up one of her dearest friends to pass the night with her, and help her to do the last offices to her son. But she replied that she wished to be left alone for that day and night, and would expect her friend in the morning. We went towards the outer door, and she, in a sort of sudden stupor, let us depart without any farewell words, and retired into the room where her

son was lying. Casting back our eyes, before our departure, we saw her steal into the bed beside the dead body, and drawing the head gently into her bosom, she lay down with him in her arms, and as if they had in that manner fallen asleep.

THE FORGERS.



"LET us sit down on this stone seat," said my aged friend, the pastor, "and I will tell you a tale of tears, concerning the last inhabitants of yonder solitary house, just visible on the hill-side, through the gloom of those melancholy pines. Ten years have passed away since the terrible catastrophe of which I am about to speak; and I know not how it is, but methinks, whenever I come into this glen, there is something rueful in its silence, while the common sounds of nature seem to my mind dirge-like and forlorn. Was not this very day bright and musical as we walked across all the other hills and valleys; but now a dim mist over-spreads the sky, and, beautiful as this lonely place must in truth be, there is a want of life in the verdure and the flowers, as if they grew beneath the darkness of perpetual shadows."

As the old man was speaking, a female figure, bent with age and infirmity, came slowly up the bank below us with a pitcher in her hand, and when she reached a little well, dug out of a low rock all covered

with moss and lichens, she seemed to fix her eyes upon it as in a dream, and gave a long, deep, broken sigh.

"The names of her husband and her only son, both dead, are chiselled by their own hands on a smooth stone within the arch of that fountain, and the childless widow at this moment sees nothing on the face of the earth but a few letters not yet overgrown with the creeping time-stains. See! her pale lips are moving in prayer, and, old as she is, and long resigned in her utter hopelessness, the tears are not yet all shed or dried up within her broken heart,—a few big drops are on her withered cheeks, but she feels them not, and is unconsciously weeping with eyes that old age has of itself enough bedimmed."

The figure remained motionless beside the well; and, though I knew not the history of the griefs that stood all embodied so mournfully before me, I felt that they must have been gathering together for many long years, and that such sighs as I had now heard came from the uttermost desolation of the human heart. At last she dipped her pitcher in the water, lifted her eyes to Heaven, and, distinctly saying, "O Jesus, Son of God! whose blood was shed for sinners, be merciful to their souls!" she turned away from the scene of her sorrow, and, like one seen in a vision, disappeared.

"I have beheld the childless widow happy," said the pastor, "even her who sat alone, with none to comfort her, on a floor swept by the hand of death of all

its blossoms. But her whom we have now seen I dare not call happy, even though she puts her trust in God and her Saviour. Her's is an affliction which faith itself cannot assuage. Yet religion may have softened even sighs like those, and, as you shall hear, it was religion that set her free from the horrid dreams of madness, and restored her to that comfort which is always found in the possession of a reasonable soul."

There was not a bee roaming near us, nor a bird singing in the solitary glen, when the old Man gave me these hints of a melancholy tale. The sky was black and lowering, as it lay on the silent hills, and enclosed us from the far-off world, in a sullen spot that was felt to be sacred unto sorrow. The figure which had come and gone with a sigh was the only dweller here; and I was prepared to hear a doleful history of one left alone to commune with a broken heart in the cheerless solitude of nature.

"That house, from whose chimnies no smoke has ascended for ten long years," continued my friend, "once showed its windows bright with cheerful fires; and her whom we now saw so woe-begone, I remember brought home a youthful bride, in all the beauty of her joy and innocence. Twenty years beheld her a wife and a mother, with all their most perfect happiness, and with some, too, of their inevitable griefs. Death passed not by her door without his victims, and, of five children, all but one died, in infancy, childhood, or blooming youth. But they died in na-

ture's common decay,—peaceful prayers were said around the bed of peace; and when the flowers grew upon their graves, the mother's eyes could bear to look on them, as she passed on with an unaching heart into the house of God. All but one died,—and better had it been if that one had never been born.

"Father, mother, and son now come to man's estate, survived, and in the house there was peace. But suddenly poverty fell upon them. The dishonesty of a kinsman, of which I need not state the particulars, robbed them of their few hereditary fields, which now passed into the possession of a stranger. They, however, remained as tenants in the house, which had been their own; and for a while, father and son bore the change of fortune seemingly undismayed, and toiled as common labourers on the soil still dearly beloved. At the dawn of light they went out together, and at twilight they returned. But it seemed as if their industry was in vain. Year after year the old Man's face became more deeply furrowed, and more seldom was he seen to smile; and his son's countenance, once bold and open, was now darkened with anger and dissatisfaction. They did not attend public worship so regularly as they used to do; when I met them in the fields, or visited them in their dwelling, they looked on me coldly, and with altered eyes; and I grieved to think how soon they both seemed to have forgotten the blessings Providence had so long permitted them to enjoy, and how sullenly they now

struggled with its decrees. But something worse than poverty was now disturbing both their hearts.

"The unhappy old Man had a brother who at this time died, leaving an only son, who had for many years abandoned his father's house, and of whom all tidings had long been lost. It was thought by many that he had died beyond seas; and none doubted, that, living or dead, he had been disinherited by his stern and unrelenting parent. On the day after the funeral, the old Man produced his brother's will, by which he became heir to all his property, except an annuity to be paid to the natural heir, should he ever return. Some pitied the prodigal son, who had been disinherited—some blamed the father—some envied the good fortune of those who had so ill borne adversity. But in a short time the death, the will, and the disinherited, were all forgotten, and the lost lands being redeemed, peace, comfort, and happiness were supposed again to be restored to the dwelling from which they had so long been banished.

"But it was not so. If the furrows on the old Man's face were deep before, when he had to toil from morning to night, they seemed to have sunk into more ghastly trenches, now that the goodness of Providence had restored a gentle shelter to his declining years. When seen wandering through his fields at even-tide, he looked not like the Patriarch musing tranquilly on the works and ways of God; and when my eyes met his during divine service, which he now

again attended with scrupulous regularity, I sometimes thought they were suddenly averted in conscious guilt; or closed in hypocritical devotion. I scarcely know if I had any suspicions against him in my mind or not; but his high bald head, thin silver hair, and countenance with its fine features so intelligent, had no longer the same solemn expression which they once possessed, and something dark and hidden seemed now to belong to them, which withstood his forced and unnatural smile. The son, who, in the days of their former prosperity, had been stained by no vice, and who, during their harder lot, had kept himself aloof from all his former companions, now became dissolute and profligate, nor did he meet with any reproof from a father whose heart would once have burst asunder at one act of wickedness in his beloved child.

"About three years after the death of his father, the disinherited son returned to his native parish. He had been a sailor on board various ships on foreign stations—but hearing by chance of his father's death, he came to claim his inheritance. Having heard, on his arrival, that his uncle had succeeded to the property, he came to me and told me, that the night before he left his home, his father stood by his bed-side, kissed him, and said, that never more would he own such an undutiful son—but that he forgave him all his sins—at death would not defraud him of the pleasant fields that had so long belonged to his humble an-

cestors—and hoped to meet reconciled in Heaven. "My uncle is a villain," said he, fiercely, "and I will cast anchor on the green bank where I played when a boy, even if I must first bring his grey head to the scaffold!"

"I accompanied him to the house of his uncle. It was a dreadful visit. The family had just sat down to their frugal mid-day meal; and the old man, though for some years he could have had little heart to pray, had just lifted up his hand to ask a blessing. Our shadows, as we entered the door, fell upon the table—and turning his eyes, he beheld before him on the floor the man whom he fearfully hoped had been buried in the sea. His face was indeed, at that moment, most unlike that of prayer, but he still held up his lean, shrivelled, trembling hand. "Accursed hypocrite," cried the fierce mariner, "dost thou call down the blessing of God on a meal won basely from the orphan? But, lo! God, whom thou hast blasphemed, has sent me from the distant isles of the ocean, to bring thy white head into the hangman's hands!"

"For a moment all was silent—then a loud stifled gasping was heard, and she whom you saw a little while ago, rose shrieking from her seat, and fell down on her knees at the sailor's feet. The terror of that unforgiven crime, now first revealed to her knowledge, struck her down to the floor. She fixed her bloodless face on his before whom she knelt—but she spoke not a single word. There was a sound in her

convulsed throat like the death-rattle. "I forged the will," said the son, advancing towards his cousin with a firm step, "my father could not—I alone am guilty —I alone must die." The wife soon recovered the power of speech, but it was so unlike her usual voice, that I scarcely thought, at first, the sound proceeded from her white quivering lips. "As you hope for mercy at the great judgment day, let the old man make his escape—hush, hush, hush—till in a few days he has sailed away in the hold of some ship to America. You surely will not hang an old grey-headed man of threescore and ten years!"

"The sailor stood silent and frowning. There seemed neither pity nor cruelty in his face; he felt himself injured; and looked resolved to right himself, happen what would. "I say he has forged my father's will. As to escaping, let him escape if he can. I do not wish to hang him; though I have seen better men run up to the fore-yard arm before now, for only asking their own. But no more kneeling, woman—Holla! where is the old man gone?"

"We all looked ghastlily around, and the wretched wife and mother, springing to her feet, rushed out of the house. We followed, one and all. The door of the stable was open, and, the mother and son entering, loud shrieks were heard. The miserable old man had slunk out of the room unobserved during the passion that had struck all our souls, and had endeavoured to commit suicide. His own son cut him down, as he

hung suspended from a rafter in that squalid place, and, carrying him in his arms, laid him down upon the green bank in front of the house. There he lay with his livid face, and blood-shot protruded eyes, till, in a few minutes, he raised himself up, and fixed them upon his wife, who, soon recovering from a fainting fit, came shrieking from the mire in which she had fallen down. "Poor people!" said the sailor with a gasping voice, "you have suffered enough for your crime. Fear nothing; the worst is now past: and rather would I sail the seas twenty years longer, than add another pang to that old man's heart. Let us be kind to the old man."

"But it seemed as if a raven had croaked the direful secret all over the remotest places among the hills; for, in an hour, people came flocking in from all quarters, and it was seen, that concealment or escape was no longer possible, and that father and son were destined to die together a felon's death."

Here the pastor's voice ceased; and I had heard enough to understand the long deep sigh that had come moaning from that bowed-down figure beside the solitary well. "That was the last work done by the father and son, and finished the day before the fatal discovery of their guilt. It had probably been engaged in as a sort of amusement to beguile their unhappy minds of ever-anxious thoughts, or perhaps as a solitary occupation, at which they could unburthen their guilt to one another undisturbed. Here, no

doubt, in the silence and solitude, they often felt remorse, perhaps penitence. They chiselled out their names on that slab, as you perceive; and hither, as duly as the morning and evening shadows, comes the ghost whom we beheld, and, after a prayer for the souls of them so tenderly beloved in their innocence, and doubtless even more tenderly beloved in their guilt and in their graves, she carries to her lonely hut the water that helps to preserve her hopeless life, from the well dug by dearest hands, now mouldered away, both flesh and bone, into the dust."

After a moment's silence the old man continued,—for he saw that I longed to hear the details of that dreadful catastrophe, and his own soul seemed likewise desirous of renewing its grief,—"The prisoners were condemned. Hope there was none. It was known, from the moment of the verdict—guilty,—that they would be executed. Petitions were, indeed, signed by many many thousands; but it was all in vain,—and the father and the son had to prepare themselves for death.

"About a week after condemnation I visited them in their cell. God forbid, I should say that they were resigned. Human nature could not resign itself to such a doom; and I found the old man pacing up and down the stone-floor, in his clanking chains, with hurried steps, and a countenance of unspeakable horror. The son was lying on his face upon his bed of straw, and had not lifted up his head, as the massy bolts

were withdrawn, and the door creaked sullenly on its hinges. The father fixed his eyes upon me for some time, as if I had been a stranger intruding upon his misery; and, as soon as he knew me, shut them with a deep groan, and pointed to his son. "I have murdered William—I have brought my only son to the scaffold, and I am doomed to hell!" I gently called on the youth by name, but he was insensible—he was lying in a fit. "I fear he will awake out of that fit," cried the old man with a broken voice. "They have come upon him every day since our condemnation, and sometimes during the night. It is not fear for himself that brings them on—for my boy, though guilty, is brave—but he continues looking on my face for hours, till at last he seems to lose all sense, and falls down in strong convulsions, often upon the stone floor, till he is all covered with blood." The old man then went up to his son, knelt down, and, putting aside the thick clustering hair from his forehead, continued kissing him for some minutes, with deep sobs, but eyes dry as dust.

"But why should I recal to my remembrance, or describe to you, every hour of anguish that I witnessed in that cell? For several weeks it was all agony and despair—the Bible lay unheeded before their ghastly eyes—and for them there was no consolation. The old man's soul was filled but with one thought—that he had deluded his son into sin, death, and eternal punishment. He never slept; but visions, terrible as

those of sleep, seemed often to pass before him, till I have seen the grey hairs bristle horribly over his temples, and big drops of sweat plash down upon the floor. I sometimes thought, that they would both die before the day of execution; but their mortal sorrows, though they sadly changed both face and frame, seemed at last to give a horrible energy to life, and every morning that I visited them, they were stronger, and more broadly awake in the chill silence of their lonesome prison-house.

"I know not how a deep change was at last wrought upon their souls, but two days before that of execution, on entering their cell, I found them sitting calm and composed by each other's side, with the Bible open before them. Their faces, though pale and haggard, had lost that glare of misery, that so long had shone about their restless and wandering eyes, and they looked like men recovering from a long and painful sickness. I almost thought I saw something like a faint smile of hope. "God has been merciful unto us," said the father, with a calm voice.—"I must not think that he has forgiven my sins, but he has enabled me to look on my poor son's face—to kiss him—to fold him in my arms—to pray for him—to fall asleep with him in my bosom, as I used often to do in the days of his boyhood, when, during the heat of mid-day, I rested from labour below the trees of my own farm. We have found resignation at last, and are prepared to die."

"There were no transports of deluded enthusiasm

in the souls of these unhappy men. They had never doubted the truth of revealed religion, although they had fatally disregarded its precepts ; and now that remorse had given way to penitence, and nature had become reconciled to the thought of inevitable death, the light that had been darkened, but never extinguished in their hearts, rose up anew; and knowing that their souls were immortal, they humbly put their faith in the mercy of their Creator and their Redeemer.

"It was during that resigned and serene hour, that the old Man ventured to ask for the mother of his poor unhappy boy. I told him the truth calmly, and calmly he heard it all. On the day of his condemnation, she had been deprived of her reason, and, in the house of a kind friend, whose name he blessed, now remained in merciful ignorance of all that had befallen, believing herself, indeed, to be a motherless widow, but one who had long ago lost her husband, and all her children, in the ordinary course of nature. At this recital his soul was satisfied. The son said nothing, but wept long and bitterly.

"The day of execution came at last. The great city lay still as on the morning of the Sabbath-day ; and all the ordinary business of life seemed, by one consent of the many thousand hearts beating there, to be suspended. But as the hours advanced, the frequent tread of feet was heard in every avenue; the streets began to fill with pale, anxious, and impatient faces; and many eyes were turned to the dials on the

steeples, watching the silent progress of the finger of time, till it should reach the point at which the curtain was to be drawn up from before a most mournful tragedy.

" The hour was faintly heard through the thick prison walls by us, who were together for the last time in the condemned cell. I had administered to them the most awful rite of our religion, and father and son sat together as silent as death. The door of the dungeon opened, and several persons came in. One of them, who had a shrivelled bloodless face, and small red fiery eyes, an old man, feeble and tottering, but crüel in his decrepitude, laid hold of the son with his palsied fingers, and began to pinion his arms with a cord. No resistance was offered; but, straight and untrembling, stood that tall and beautiful youth, while the fiend bound him for execution. At this mournful sight, how could I bear to look on his father's face? Yet thither were mine eyes impelled by the agony that afflicted my commiserating soul. During that hideous gaze, he was insensible of the executioner's approach towards himself; and all the time that the cords were encircling his own arms, he felt them not, —he saw nothing but his son standing at last before him, ready for the scaffold.

" I dimly recollect a long dark vaulted passage, and the echoing tread of footsteps, till all at once we stood in a crowded hall, with a thousand eyes fixed on these two miserable men. How unlike were they to all be-

side! They sat down together within the shadow of death. Prayers were said, and a psalm was sung, in which their voices were heard to join, with tones that wrung out tears from the hardest or the most careless heart. Often had I heard those voices singing in my own peaceful church, before evil had disturbed, or misery broken them;—but the last word of the psalm was sung, and the hour of their departure was come.

"They stood at last upon the scaffold. That long street, that seemed to stretch away interminably from the old Prison-house, was paved with uncovered heads, for the moment these ghosts appeared, that mighty crowd felt reverence for human nature so terribly tried, and prayers and blessings, passionately ejaculated, or convulsively stifled, went hovering over all the multitude, as if they feared some great calamity to themselves, and felt standing on the first tremor of an earthquake.

"It was a most beautiful summer's day on which they were led out to die; and as the old man raised his eyes, for the last time, to the sky, the clouds lay motionless on that blue translucent arch, and the sun shone joyously over the magnificent heavens. It seemed a day made for happiness or for mercy. But no pardon dropt down from these smiling skies, and the vast multitude were not to be denied the troubled feast of death. Many who now stood there wished they had been in the heart of some far-off wood or glen; there was shrieking and fainting, not only among

maids, and wives, and matrons, who had come there in the mystery of their hearts, but men fell down in their strength,—for it was an overwhelming thing to behold a father and his only son now haltered for a shameful death. "Is my father with me on the scaffold?—give me his hand, for I see him not." I joined their hands together, and at that moment the great bell in the Cathedral tolled, but I am convinced neither of them heard the sound.—For a moment there seemed to be no such thing as sound in the world;—and then all at once the multitude heaved like the sea, and uttered a wild yelling shriek.—Their souls were in eternity—and I fear not to say, not an eternity of grief."

THE FAMILY-TRYST.

THE fire had received an addition of a large ash-root and a heap of peats, and was beginning both to crackle and blaze; the hearth-stone was tidily swept —the supper-table set—and every seat, bench, chair, and stool occupied by its customary owner, except the high-backed, carved, antique oaken armed-chair belonging exclusively to the Goodman. Innocence, labour, contentment, and mirth were here all assembled together in the wide low-roofed kitchen of this sheltered farm-house, called, from its situation in a low woody dell, The How; and all that was wanting to make the happiness complete was Abel Alison himself, the master and father of the family. It seemed to them that he was rather later than usual in returning from the city, whither he went every market-day. But though it was a boisterous night in April, with a good drift of snow going, they had no apprehensions whatever of his safety; and when they heard the trampling of his horse's feet on the gravel, up sprung half-a-dozen creatures of various sizes to hail

him at the door, and to conduct the colt, for so they continued to call a horse now about fifteen years old, to his fresh-strawed stall in the byre. All was right—Abel entered with his usual smile, his wife helped him off with his great-coat, which had a respectable sprinkling of snow, and stiffening of frost; he assumed his usual seat; or, as his youngest son and namesake, who was the wit of the family, called it, his throne, and supper immediately smoking on the board, a blessing was said, and a flourish of wooden spoons ensued.

Supper being over, and a contented silence prevailing, with an occasional whispered remark of merriment or affection circling round, Abel Alison rested himself with more than his usual formality against the back of his chair, and putting on not an unhappy, but a grave face, told his wife, and family, and servants, all to make up their minds to hear some very bad news nearly affecting themselves. There was something too anxiously serious in his look, voice, and attitude, to permit a thought of his wishing to startle them for a moment by some false alarm. So at once they were all hushed—young and old—and turned towards their father with fixed countenances and anxious eyes.

"Wife—and children—there is no need, surely, to go round about the bush—I will tell you the worst in a word. I am ruined. That is to say, all my property is lost—gone—and we must leave the How. There is no help for it—we must leave the How."

His wife's face grew pale, and for a short space she

said nothing. A slight convulsive motion went over all the circle as if they had been one body, or an electric shock had struck them all sitting together with locked hands. "Leave the How!" one voice sobbing exclaimed—it was a female voice—but it was not repeated, and it was uncertain from whom it came. "Why, Abel,"—said his wife calmly, who had now perfectly recovered herself, "if we must leave the How, we must leave a bonny sheltered spot, where we have seen many happy days. But what then? surely there may be contentment found many a where else besides in this cheerful room, and round about our birken banks and braes. For mysel, I shall not lose a night's rest at the thought, if you, Abel, can bear it—and, God bless you, I have known you bear a severer blow than this!"

Abel Alison was a free, warm-hearted man, of a happy disposition, and always inclined to look at every thing in a favourable light. He was also a most industrious hard-working man. But he could not always say "nay,"—and what he earned with a month's toil he had more than once lost by a moment's easy good-nature. He had some time before imprudently become surety for an acquaintance, who had no such rightful claim upon him—that acquaintance was a man of no principle—and Abel was now ruined—utterly and irretrievably ruined. Under such circumstances, he could not be altogether without self-reproach—and the kind magnanimity of his wife now brought the

tear into his eye. "Aye—aye—I was just the old man in that foolish business. I should have remembered you, Alice—and all my bairns. But I hope—I know you will forgive me—for having thus been the means of bringing you all to poverty."

Upon this, Abel's eldest son—a young man about twenty years of age, stood up, and first looking with the most respectful tenderness upon his Father, and then with a cheerful smile upon all around, said, "Father, never more utter these words—never more have these thoughts. You have fed us—clothed us—educated us—taught us what is our duty to God and man. It rests with ourselves to practise it. We all love you—Father—we are all grateful—we would all lay down our lives to save yours. But there is no need for that now. What has happened? Nothing. Are we not all well—all strong—cannot we all work? As God is my witness, and knows my heart, I now declare, before you, Father, that this is not a visitation, but it is a blessing. Now it will be tried whether we love you, Father—whether you have prayed every morning and every night for more than twenty years for ungrateful children—whether your toil in sun and rain, and snow, has been thankless toil—or whether we will not all rally round your grey head, and find it a pleasant shelter—a smooth pillow—and a plenteous board;"—and with that he unconsciously planted his foot more firmly on the floor, and stretched out his right arm, standing there a tall, straight, powerful

stripling, in whom there was visible protection and succour for his parents and their declining age.

One spirit kindled over all—not a momentary flash of enthusiasm, not a mere movement of pity and love towards their Father, which might give way to dissatisfaction and despondency,—but a true, deep, clear reconcilement of their souls to their lot, and a resolution not to be shaken in its unquaking power by any hardships either in anticipation or reality. Abel Alison saw and felt this, and his soul burned within him. "We shall all go to service—no shame in that. But we shall have time enough to consider of all these points before the term-day. We have some weeks before us at the How—and let us make the most of them. Wife, children, are you all happy?"

"All—all—perfectly happy—happier than ever,"—was the general burst of the reply.

"Stir up that fire—my merry little Abel,"—said the mother,—"and let us have a good, full, bright blaze on your father's face—God bless him!"

Abel brandished an immense poker in both hands, and after knitting his brows, and threatening to aim a murderous blow on the temples of the beautiful little Alice on her stool close to the ingle, and at her father's feet, a practical joke that seemed infinitely amusing, he gave the great ash root a thump that sent a thousand sparkling gems up the wide chimney, and then placing the poker under it like a lever, he hoisted up the burning mass, till a blaze of brightness dazzled all

their eyes, and made Luath start up from his slumbers on the hearth.

"Come, Alice"—said the father, for we must not be cheated out of our music as well as our money—"let us have your song as usual, my bonny linnet—something that suits the season—cheerful and mournful at the same time—"Auld lang syne" or "Lochaber no more." "I will sing them baith—Father—first the ane and then the ither"—and as her sweet silver pipe trilled plaintively along, now and then other voices, and among them that of old Abel's himself, were heard joining in the touching air.

"What think you o' the singing this night—my gude dog, Luath?" quoth little cunning Abel, taking the dumb creature's offered paw into his hand. "But do you know, Luath—you greedy fellow, who have often stolen my cheese and bread on the hill when my head was turned—though you are no thief either Luath—I say, Sir, do you know that we are all going to be—starved? Come—here is the last mouthful of cake you will ever have all the days of your life—henceforth you must eat grass like a sheep. Hold your nose—Sir—there—one—two—three! Steady—snap—swallow! Well catched! Digest that and be thankful."

"Children," said the old Man, "suppose we make a Family-Tryst, which, if we be all alive, let us religiously keep—aye—religiously, for it will be a day either of fast or of thanksgiving. Let us all meet on the term-

day, that is, I believe, the twelfth of May come a twelve-month, on the green plot of ground beside the Shaw Linn, in which we have for so many years washed our sheep. It is a bonny, lown, quiet spot, where nobody will come to disturb us. We will all meet together before the gloaming, and compare the stories of our year's life and doings, and say our prayers together in the open air, and beneath the moon and stars." The proposal was joyfully agreed to by all.

Family worship was now performed. Abel Alison prayed as fervently, and with as grateful a heart as he had done the night before. For his piety did not keep an account current of debtor and creditor with God. All was God's—of his own he had nothing. God had chosen to vary to him the mode and place of his few remaining years on earth. Was that a cause for repining? God had given him health, strength, a loving wife, dutiful children, a good conscience. No palsy had stricken him—no fever devoured him—no blindness darkened his path. Only a few grey hairs were as yet sprinkled among the black. His boys could bear being looked at and spoken to in any company, gentle or simple; and his daughters, they were like the water-lilies, that are serene in the calm clear water, but no less serene among the black and scowling waves. So Abel Alison and all his family lay down on their beds; and long before midnight they were all fast asleep.

The time came when the farm—the bonny farm of

the How was given up, and another family took possession. Abel's whole stock was taken by the new tenant, who was a good, and honest, and merciful man, at a fair valuation. With the sum thus got, Abel paid all his debts—that large fatal one—and his few small ones at the Carpenter's shop, the Smithy, and Widow Anderson's, the green, grey, black, brown, and white grocer of the village; and then he and his family were left without a shilling. Yet none pitied them—they were above pity. They would all have scorned either to beg or borrow, for many of their neighbours were as poor, and not a great many much richer than themselves after all; and therefore they set their cheerful faces against the blast, and it was never felt to touch them. The eldest son immediately hired himself at high wages, for his abilities, skill, and strength were well known, as head servant with the richest farmer in the next parish—which was famous for its agriculture. The second son, who was of an ingenious and thoughtful cast of character, engaged himself as one of the under gardeners at Pollock-Castle—and the third, Abel the wag, became a shepherd with an old friend of his father's, within a few hundred yards of the How. The eldest daughter went into service in the family of the Laird of Southfield, one of the most respectable in the parish. The second was kindly taken into the Manse as a nurse to the younger children, and a companion to the elder—and Alice, who, from her sweet voice, was always called the Linnet,

became a shepherdess along with her brother Abel. The mother went to the Hall to manage the dairy—the Baronet being a great man for cheese and butter—and the father lived with her in a small cottage near the Hall-gate, employing himself in every kind of work that offered itself, for he was a neat-handed man, and few things, our of doors or in, came amiss to his fingers, whether it required a delicate touch or a strong blow. Thus were they all settled to their hearts' content before the hedgerows were quite green—and though somewhat scattered, yet were they all within two hours' journey of each other, and their hearts were all as close together as when inhabiting the sweet, lown, bird-nest-like cottage of the How.

The year with all its seasons fleeted happily by—the long warm months of summer, when the night brings coolness rather than the shut of light—the fitful, broken, and tempestuous Autumn—the Winter, whose short, but severe days of toil in the barn, and cheerful fireside-nights, with all their work, and all their amusements—soon—too soon, it is often felt, give way to the open-weather and active life of Spring—the busy, working, enlivening Spring itself—were now flown by—and it was now the day of the *Family-Tryst,* the dear Twelfth Day of the beautiful but capricious month of May.

Had any one died whose absence would damp the joy and hilarity of the Family-Tryst, and make it a meeting for the shedding of tears? No. A kind God

had counted the beatings of every pulse, and kept the blood of them all in a tranquil flow. The year had not passed by without many happy greetings—they had met often and often—at church—at market—on chance visits at neighbours' houses—and not rarely at the cottage at the Hall-gate. There had been nothing deserving the name of separation. Yet, now that the hour of the *Family-Tryst* was near at hand, all their hearts bounded within them, and they saw before them all day, that smooth verdant plat, and heard the delightful sound of that Waterfall.

The day had been cheerful, both with breezes and with sunshine, and not a rain-cloud had shown itself in the sky. Towards the afternoon the wind fell, and nature became more serenely beautiful every minute as the evening was coming on with its silent dews. The Parents came first to the Trysting-place, cheered, as they approached it down the woody glen, by the deepening voice of the Shaw-linn. Was that small turf-built Altar, and the circular turf-seat that surrounded it, built by fairy hands? They knew at once that some of their happy children had so employed a few leisure evening hours, and they sat down on the little mound with hearts overflowing with silent—perhaps speechless gratitude.

But they sat not long there by themselves—beloved faces, at short intervals, came smiling upon them—one through the coppice-wood, where there was no path—another across the meadow—a third appeared

with a gladsome shout on the cliff of the waterfall—a fourth seemed to rise out of the very ground before them—and last of all came, preceded by the sound of laughter and of song, with which the calm air was stirred, Abel and Alice, the fairies who had reared that green grassy Altar, and who, from their covert in the shade, had been enjoying the gradual assemblage. "Blessings be to our God—not a head is wanting," said the Father, unable to contain his tears—"this night could I die in peace!"

Little Abel and Alice, who, from their living so near the spot, had taken upon themselves the whole management of the evening's ceremonial, brought forth from a bush where they had concealed them, a basket of bread and cheese and butter, a jar of milk, and another of honey—and placed them upon the turf—as if they had been a rural gift to some rural deity. "I thought you would be all hungry," said Abel, "after your trudge—and as for Simon there, the jolly gardener, he will eat all the kibbock himself, if I do not keep a sharp eye upon him. Simon was always a sure hand at a meal. But, Alice, reach me over the milk-jar. Ladies and gentlemen, all your very good healths—Our noble selves." This was felt to be very fair wit of Abel's—and there was an end to the old Man's tears.

"I vote," quoth Abel, "that every man (beginning with myself, who will be the oldest man among you when I have lived long enough) give an account of

himself, and produce whatever of the ready rhino he may have made, found, or stolen, since he left the How. However, I will give way to my Father—now for it, Father—let us hear if you have been a good boy." "Will that imp never hold its tongue?" cried the mother, making room for him at the same time on the turf seat by her side—and beckoning him with a smile, which he obeyed, to occupy it.

"Well then," quoth the Father, "I have not been sitting with my hands folded, or leaning on my elbows. Among other small matters, I have helped to lay about half-a-mile of high road on the Macadam plan, across the lang quagmire on the Mearns Muir, so that nobody need be sucked in there again for fifty years to come at the very soonest. With my own single pair of hands I have built about thirty rood of stone-dike five feet high, with two rows of through-stones, connecting Saunders Mill's garden-wall with the fence round the Fir Belt. I have delved to some decent purpose on some half score of neighbours' kail-yards, and clipped their hedges round and straight, not forgetting to dock a bit off the tails o' some o' the peacocks and outlandish birds on that queer auld-fashioned terrace at Mallets-Heugh. I cannot have mown under some ten braid Scots acres of rye-grass and meadow hay together, but finding my back stiff in the stooping, I was a stooker and a bandster on the Corn-rigs. I have threshed a few thrieves in the minister's barn—prime oats they were, for the glebe

had been seven years in lea. I have gone some dozen times to Lesmahago for the clear-lowing coals, a drive of forty miles back and forward I'se warrant it. I have felled and boughed about forty ash-trees, and lent a hand now and then in the saw-pit. I also let some o' the daylight into the fir wood at Hallside, and made a bonny bit winding walk along the burnside for the young ladies' feet. So, to make a long story short, there is a receipt (clap a bit o' turf on't, Abel, to keep it frae fleeing off the daisies) from the Savings Bank, for L. 25, 13s. signed by Baillie Trumbell's ain hand. That is a sight gude for sair een! Now, Mrs Alison, for I must give you the title you bear in the Hall, what say you?"

"I have done nothing but superintend the making o' butter and cheese, the one as rich as Dutch, and the other preferable to Stilton. My wages are just fifteen pounds, and there they are. Lay them down beside your Father's receipt. But I have more to tell. If ever we are able to take a bit farm of our own again, my Lady has promised to give me the Ayrshire Hawkie, that yields sixteen pints a-day for months at a time, o' real rich milkness. She would bring L. 20 in any market. So count that L. 35, my bonny bairns. Speak out my Willy, no fear but you have a good tale to tell."

"There is a receipt for thirty pounds, lent this blessed day, at five per cent. to auld Laird Shaw—as safe as the ground we tread upon. My wages are

forty pounds a-year—as you know—and I have twice got the first prize at the Competition o' Ploughmen—thanks to you father for that. The rest of the money is gone upon fine clothes and upon the bonny lasses on a Fair-day. Why should not we have our enjoyments in this world as well as richer folk?" "God bless you, Willy," said the old Man; "you would not let me nor your mother part with our Sunday's clothes, when that crash came upon us—though we were willing to do so, to right all our creditors. You became surety for the amount—and you have paid it—I know that. Well—it may not be worth speaking about—but it is worth thinking about—Willy—and a Father need not be ashamed to receive a kindness from his own flesh and blood."

"It is my turn now," said Andrew, the young gardener. "There is twelve pounds—and next year it will be twenty. I am to take the flower-garden into my own hand—and let the Paisley florists look after their pinks, and tulips, and anemones, or I know where the prizes will come after this. There's a bunch o' flowers for you, Alice—if you put them in water they will live till the Sabbath-day, and you may put some of them into your bonnet. Father, William said he had to thank you for his ploughmanship—so have I for my gardening. And wide and rich as the flower-garden is that I am to take now under my own hand, do you think I will ever love it better, or sa weel, as the bit plot on the bank-side, with its bower in the

corner, the birks hanging ower it without keeping off the sun, and the clear burnie wimpling away at its foot? There I first delved with a small spade o' my ain—you put the shaft in yourself—Father—and, trust me, it will be a while before that piece o' wood gangs into the fire."

"Now for my speech,"—said Abel,—"short and sweet is my motto. I like something pithy. Lo and behold a mowdiwart's skin, with five and forty shillings in silver! It goes to my heart to part with them. Mind, father, I only lend them to you. And if you do not repay them with two shillings and better of interest next May-day, Old Style, I will put the affair into the hands of scranky Pate Orr, the writer at Thorny-Bank. But, hold—will you give me what is called heritable security? That means land, doesn't it? Well, then, turf is land—and I thus fling down the mowdiwart purse on the turf—and that is lending money on heritable security." A general laugh rewarded this ebullition of genius from Abel, who received such plaudits with a face of cunning solemnity,—and then the eldest daughter meekly took up the word and said—"My wages were nine pounds—there they are!" "Oh! ho," cried Abel, "who gave you, Agnes, that bonny blue spotted silk handkerchief round your neck, and that bonny but gae droll pattern'd goun? You had not these at the How—may be you got them from your sweetheart;"—and Agnes

blushed in her innocence like the beautiful flower, "Celestial rosy red, Love's proper hue."

The little Nourice from the Manse laid down on the turf without speaking, but with a heartsome smile, her small wage of four pounds—and, last of all, the little, fair-haired, blue-eyed, snowy-skinned Alice the shepherdess, with motion soft as light, and with a voice sweet as an air-harp, placed her wages too beside the rest—"There is a golden guinea—it is to be two next year, and so on till I am fifteen. Every little helps." And her father took her to his heart, and kissed her glistening ringlets and her smiling eyes, that happily shut beneath the touch of his loving lips.

By this time the sun had declined—and the sweet sober gloaming was about to melt into the somewhat darker beauty of a summer night. The air was now still and silent, as if unseen creatures that had been busy there had all gone to rest. The mavis that had been singing loud, and mellow, and clear, on the highest point of a larch, now and then heard by the party in their happiness, had flitted down to be near his mate on her nest within the hollow root of an old ivy-wreathed yew-tree. The snow-white coney looked out from the coppice, and bending his long ears towards the laughing scene, drew back unstartled into the thicket. "Nay—nay—Luath," whispered Abel, patting his dog, that was between his knees, "you must not kill the poor bit white rabbit. But if a maukin would show herself, I would let thee take a

brattle after her through the wood. For she could only cock her fud at a' thy yelping, and land thee in a net o' briars to scratch thy hide and tangle thy tail in. You canna catch a maukin—Luath—they're ower soople for you, you fat lazy tyke."

The old man now addressed his children with a fervent voice, and told them that their dutiful behaviour to him, their industrious habits, their moral conduct in general, and their regard to their religious duties, all made them a blessing to him, for which he never could be sufficiently thankful to the Giver of all mercies. "Money," said he, "is well called the root of all evil —but not so now. There it lies—upon that turf—an offering from poor children to their poor parents. It is a beautiful sight—my bairns—but your parents need it not. They have enough. May God for ever bless you—my dear bairns.—That night at the How, I said this meeting would be either a fast or a thanksgiving; and that we would praise God with a prayer, and also the voice of psalms. No house is near—no path by which any one will be coming at this quiet hour. So let us worship our Maker—here is the Bible."

"Father," said the eldest son, "will you wait a few minutes—for I am every moment expecting two dear friends to join us? Listen, I hear footsteps, and the sound of voices round the corner of the coppice. They are at hand."

A beautiful young woman, dressed almost in the same manner as a farmer's daughter, but with a sort of

sylvan grace about her, that seemed to denote some-what higher station, now appeared, along with a youth, who might be her brother. Kindly greetings were interchanged, and room being made for them, they formed part of the circle round the Altar of turf. A sweet surprise was in the hearts of the party at this addition to their number, and every face brightened with a new delight. "That is bonny Sally Mather of the Burn-House," whispered little Alice to her brother Abel. "She passed me ae day on the brae, and made me the present of a comb for my hair you ken, when you happened to be on the ither side o' the wood! Oh! Abel, has nae she the bonniest and the sweetest een that ever you saw smile?"

This young woman, who appeared justly so beauti-ful in the eyes of little Alice, was even more so in those of her eldest brother. She was sitting at his side, and the wide earth did not contain two happier human beings than these humble, virtuous, and sin-cere lovers. Sally Mather was the beauty of the pa-rish; and she was also an heiress, or rather now the owner of the Burn-House, a farm worth about a hun-dred a-year, and one of the pleasantest situations in a parish remarkable for the picturesque and romantic character of its scenery. She had received a much better education than young women generally do in her rank of life, her father having been a common far-mer, but, by successful skill and industry, having been enabled, in the decline of life, to purchase the farm

which he had improved to such a pitch of beautiful cultivation. Her heart William Alison had won—and now she had been for some days betrothed to him as his bride. He now informed his parents, and his brothers and sisters of this; and proud was he, and better than proud, when they all bade God bless her, and when his father and mother took her each by the hand, and kissed her, and wept over her in the fulness of their exceeding joy.

"We are to be married at mid-summer; and, father and mother, before the winter sets in, there shall be a dwelling ready for you, not quite so roomy as our old house at the How, but a bonny bield for you, I hope, for many a year to come. It is not a quarter of a mile from our own house, and we shall not charge you a high rent for it, and the two three fields about it. You shall be a farmer again, Father, and no fear of ever being turned out again, be the lease short or long."

Fair Sally Mather joined her lover in this request with her kindly smiling eyes, and what greater happiness could there be to such parents than to think of passing the remainder of their declining life near such a son, and such a pleasant being as their new daughter? "Abel and I," cried little Alice, unable to repress her joyful affection, "will live with you again—I will do all the work about the house that I am strong enough for, and Abel, you ken, is as busy as the unwearied bee, and will help my Father about

the fields, better and better every year. May we come home to you from service, Abel and I?" "Are you not happy enough where you are?" asked the Mother, with a loving voice. "Happy or not happy," quoth Abel, "home we come at the term, as sure as that is the cuckoo. Harken how the dunce keeps repeating his own name, as if any body did not know it already. Yonder he goes—with his titling at his tail—people talk of the cuckoo never being seen —why, I cannot open my eyes without seeing either him or his wife. Well, as I was saying—Father—home Alice and I come at the term. Pray, what wages?"

But what brought the young Laird of Southfield here? thought the Mother—while a dim and remote suspicion, too pleasant, too happy, to be true, past across her maternal heart. Her sweet Agnes was a servant in his father's house—and though that father was a laird, and lived on his own land, yet he was in the very same condition of life as her husband, Abel Alison—they had often sat at each other's table—and her bonny daughter was come of an honest kind, and would not disgrace any husband either in his own house, or a neighbour's, or in his seat in the kirk. Such passing thoughts were thickening in the Mother's breast, and perhaps not wholly unknown also to the Father's, when the young man, looking towards Agnes, who could not lift up her eyes from the ground, said, "My Father is willing and happy that I should marry the daughter of Abel Alison. For he wishes me

no other wife than the virtuous daughter of an honest man. And I will be happy—if my Agnes make as good a wife as her mother."

A perfect blessedness now filled the souls of Abel Alison and his wife. One year ago, and they were, what is called, utterly ruined—they put their trust in God—and now they received their reward. But their pious and humble hearts did not feel it to be a reward, for in themselves they were conscious of no desert. The joy came from Heaven, undeserved by them, and with silent thanksgiving and adoration did they receive it, like dew into their opening spirits.

"Rise up, Alice, and let us have a dance," and with these words little Abel caught his unreluctant sister round the waist and whirled her off into the open green, as smooth as a floor. The young gardener took from his pocket a German-flute, and began warbling away, with much flourishing execution, the gay lively air of "Oure the water to Charlie," and the happy children, who had been one winter at the dancing-school, and had often danced by themselves on the fairy rings on the hill-side, glided through the gloaming in all the mazes of a voluntary and extemporaneous duett. And then, descending suddenly and beautifully from the very height of glee into a composed gladness, left off the dance in a moment, and again seated themselves in the applauding circle.

"I have dropped my library out of my pocket," said Abel, springing up again—"yonder it is lying

on the green. That last touch of the Highland Fling jerked it out. Here it is—bonny Robbie Burns—the Twa Dogs—the Vision—the Cottar's Saturday Night—and many—many a gay sang—and some sad anes, which I leave to Alice there, and other bits o' tender-hearted lassies—but fun and frolic for my money."

"I would not give my copy o' Allan Ramsay," replied Alice, "for a stall fu' of Burns's,—at least gin the Saturday Night was clipped out. When did he ever make sic a poem as the Gentle Shepherd? Tell me that, Abel? Dear me, but is na this sweet quiet place, and the linn there, and the trees, and this green plat, just as bonnie as Habbie's How? Might na a bonny poem be made just about ourselves a' sitting here sae happy—and my brother going to marry bonny Sally Mather, and my sister the young laird o' Southfield? I'se warrant, if Allan Ramsay had been alive, and one of the party, he would have put us a' into a poem—and aiblins called it the Family-Tryst."

"I will do that myself," said Abel—"I am a dab at verse. I made some capital ones just yesterday afternoon—I wrote them down on my sclate below the sum total; but some crumbs had fallen out o' my pouch on the sclate, and Luath, licking them up, licked out a' my fine poems.—I could greet to think o't."

But now the moon showed her dazzling crescent right over their heads,—as if she had issued gleaming forth from the deep blue of that very spot of heaven in which she hung; and fainter or brighter, far and wide

over the firmament, was seen the great host of stars. The Old Man reverently uncovered his head; and, looking up to the diffused brilliancy of the magnificent arch of heaven, he solemnly exclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth forth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. My children let us kneel down and pray." They did so; and, on rising from that prayer, the mother, looking towards her husband, said, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

BLIND ALLAN.

ALLAN BRUCE and FANNY RAEBURN were in no respect remarkable among the simple inhabitants of the village in which they were born. They both bore a fair reputation in the parish, and they were both beloved by their own friends and relations. He was sober, honest, active, and industrious,—exemplary in the common duties of private life,—possessed of the humble virtues becoming his humble condition, and unstained by any of those gross vices that sometimes deform the character of the poor. She was modest, good tempered, contented, and religious—and much is contained in these four words. Beauty she was not thought to possess—nor did she attract attention; but whatever charm resides in pure health, innocence of heart, and simplicity of manners, that belonged to Fanny Raeburn; while there was nothing either about her face or figure to prevent her seeming even beautiful in the eyes of a lover.

These two humble and happy persons were betrothed in marriage. Their affection had insensibly

grown without any courtship, for they had lived daily in each other's sight; and, undisturbed by jealousy or rivalry, by agitating hopes or depressing fears, their hearts had been tenderly united long before their troth was solemnly pledged; and they now looked forward with a calm and rational satisfaction to the happy years, which they humbly hoped might be stored up for them by a bountiful Providence. Their love was without romance, but it was warm, tender, and true; they were prepared by its strength to make any sacrifice for each other's sakes; and, had death taken away either of them before the wedding-day, the survivor might not perhaps have been clamorous in grief, or visited the grave of the departed with nightly lamentations, but not the less would that grief have been sincere, and not the less faithful would memory have been to all the images of the past.

Their marriage-day was fixed—and Allan Bruce had rented a small cottage, with a garden sloping down to the stream that cheered his native village. Thither, in about two months, he was to take his sweet and affectionate Fanny—she was to work with her needle as before—and he in the fields. No change was to take place in their lives, but a change from contentment to happiness; and if God prolonged to them the possession of health, and blessed them with children, they feared not to bring them decently up, and to afford sunshine and shelter to the living

flowers that might come to gladden their house. Such thoughts visited the souls of the lovers,—and they were becoming dearer and dearer to one another every hour that brought them closer to their marriage-day.

At this time Allan began to feel a slight dimness in his sight, of which he did not take much notice, attributing it to some indisposition brought on by the severity of his winter's work. For he had toiled late and early, during all weathers, and at every kind of labour, to gain a sum sufficient to furnish respectably his lowly dwelling, and also to array his sweet bride in wedding-clothes of which she should not need to be ashamed. The dimness, however, each succeeding day, darkened and deepened, till even his Fanny's face was indistinctly discerned by him, and he lost altogether the smile which never failed to brighten it whenever he appeared. Then he became sad and dispirited, for the fear of blindness fell upon him, and he thought of his steps being led in his helplessness by the hand of a child. He prayed to God to avert this calamity from him—but if not, to bestow upon him the virtue of resignation. He thought of the different blind men whom he had known, and as far as he knew, they all seemed happy. That belief pacified his soul, when it was about to give way to a passionate despair; and every morning at sunrise when the fast advancing verdure of spring seemed more dim and glimmering before his eyes, he felt his soul more and more resigned to that final extinction of the day's

blessed light, which he knew must be his doom before the earth was covered with the flowers and fragrance of June.

It was as he had feared; and Allan Bruce was now stone-blind. Fanny's voice had always been sweet to his ear, and now it was sweeter still when heard in the darkness. Sweet had been the kisses which breathed from Fanny's lips, while his eyes delighted in their rosy freshness. But sweeter were they now when they touched his eyelids, and he felt upon his cheeks her fast trickling tears. She visited him in his father's house, and led him with her gently guiding hands into the adjacent fields, and down along the stream which he said he liked to hear murmuring by; and then they talked together about themselves, and on their knees prayed to God to counsel them what to do in their distress.

These meetings were always happy meetings to them both, notwithstanding the many mournful thoughts with which they were necessarily attended; but to Allan Bruce they yielded a support that did not forsake him in his hours of uncompanioned darkness. His love, which had formerly been joyful in the warmth of youth, and in the near prospect of enjoyment, was now chastened by the sad sense of his unfortunate condition, and rendered thereby a deep and devout emotion which had its comfort in its own unwitnessed privacy and imperishable truth. The tones of his Fanny's voice were with him on his mid-

night bed, when his affliction was like to overcome his fortitude; and to know that he was still tenderly beloved by that gentle and innocent friend, was a thought that gave light to darkness, and suffered sleep to fall balmily on lids that shut up eyes already dark as in profoundest slumber. The meek fold of her pitying embrace was with him in the vague uncertainty of his dreams; and often he saw faces in his sleep beaming consolation upon him, that always assumed at last Fanny's features, and as they grew more distinct, brightened up into a perfect likeness of his own faithful and disinterested maiden. He lay down with her image, because it was in his evening prayers; he rose up with her image, or it came gliding in upon him, as he knelt down at his bed-side in the warm beams of the unseen morning light.

Allan and Fanny were children of poor parents; and when he became blind, they, and indeed all their friends and relations, set their faces against this marriage. This they did in kindness to them both, for prudence is one of the best virtues of the poor, and to indulge even the holiest affections of our nature, seems to them to be sinful, if an infliction from God's hand intimates that such union would lead to sorrow and distress. The same thoughts had taken possession of Allan's own soul; and loving Fanny Raeburn, with a perfect affection, why should he wish her, in the bright and sunny days of her youthful prime, to become chained to a Blind Man's steps, kept in constant

poverty and drudgery for his sake, and imprisoned in a lonesome hut, during the freedom of her age, and the joyfulness of nature ringing over the earth? "It has pleased God," said the Blind Man to himself, "that our marriage should not be. Let Fanny, if she chooses, some time or other, marry another, and be happy." And as the thought arose, he felt the bitterness of the cup, and wished that he might soon be in his grave.

For, while his eyes were not thus dark, he saw many things that gave him pleasure, besides his Fanny, well as he loved her; nor had his been an absorbing passion, although most sincere. He had often been happy at his work, with his companions, in the amusements of his age and condition, with the members of his own family, without thinking even of his dear Fanny Raeburn. She was not often, to be sure, entirely out of his thoughts, for the consciousness of loving her, and of being beloved, accompanied his steps, although he scarcely knew it, just as one who lives on a lake side, or by the murmur of a stream, may feel the brightness and the shadows of the one, and hear the constant music of the other, mingling as a remembrance or a dream with the impressions, thoughts, passions, and feelings of his ordinary human life. But now, what had been less pleasant or necessary to him all faded away, and he saw in his darkness one image only—Fanny Raeburn—he heard in his darkness one sound only—Fanny Raeburn's

voice. Was she to smile in another man's house? Surely, that could not be; for her smiles were his, and to transfer them to another, seemed to him to be as impossible, as for a mother to forget her own children, and pour with equal fondness her smiles upon the face of another who belonged not to her blood. Yet such transference, such forgetfulness, such sad change had been, that he well knew, even in "the short and simple annals of the poor," which alone he had read; and who would blame, who would pity, who would remember the case of the deserted, and forsaken poor Blind Man?

Fanny Raeburn had always been a dutiful child, and she listened to the arguments of her parents with a heavy but composed heart. She was willing to obey them in all things in which it was her duty to obey—but here she knew not what was her duty. To give up Allan Bruce was a thought far worse to her than to give up life. It was to suffer her heartstrings to be hourly torn up by the roots. If the two were willing to be married, why should any one else interfere? If God had stricken Allan with blindness after their marriage, would any one have counselled her to leave him? Or pitied her because she had to live with her own blind husband? Or would the fear of poverty have benumbed her feelings? Or rather would it not have given new alacrity to her hands, and new courage to her heart? So she resolved, meekly and calmly, to tell Allan that she would be his wife, and

that she believed that such was, in spite of this infliction, the will of God.

Allan Bruce did not absent himself, in his blindness, from the House of God. One Sabbath, after divine service, Fanny went up to him in the church-yard, and putting her arm in his, they walked away together, seemingly as cheerful as the rest of the congregation, only with somewhat slower and more cautious steps. They proceeded along the quiet meadow-fields by the banks of the stream, and then across the smooth green braes, till they gently descended into a holm, and sat down together in a little green bower, which a few hazels, mingling with one tall weeping birch, had of themselves framed; a place where they had often met before Allan was blind, and where they had first spoken of a wedded life. Fanny could have almost wept to see the earth, and the sky, and the whole day, so beautiful, now that Allan's eyes were dark; but he whispered to her, that the smell of the budding trees, and of the primroses that he knew were near his feet, was pleasant indeed, and that the singing of all the little birds made his heart dance within him—so Fanny sat beside her blind lover in serene happiness, and felt strengthened in her conviction that it was her duty to become his wife.

"Allan—I love you so entirely—that to see you happy is all that I desire on earth. Till God made you blind—Allan—I knew not how my soul could be knit unto yours—I knew not the love that was in my

heart. To sit by you with my work—to lead you out thus on pleasant Sabbaths—to take care that your feet do not stumble—and that nothing shall ever offer violence to your face—to suffer no solitude to surround you—but that you may know, in your darkness, that mine eyes, which God still permits to see, are always upon you—for these ends, Allan, will I marry thee, my beloved—thou must not say nay—for God would not forgive me if I became not thy wife." And Fanny fell upon his neck and wept.

There was something in the quiet tone of her voice—something in the meek fold of her embrace—something in the long weeping kiss that she kept breathing tenderly over his brow and eyes—that justified to the Blind Man his marriage with such a woman. "Let us be married, Fanny, on the day fixed before I lost my sight. Till now I knew not fully either your heart or my own—now I fear nothing. Would—my best friend—I could but see thy sweet face for one single moment now—but that can never be!"—"All things are possible to God—and although to human skill your case is hopeless—it is not utterly so to my heart—yet if ever it becomes so, Allan, then will I love thee better even than I do now, if indeed my heart can contain more affection than that with which it now overflows."

Allan Bruce and Fanny Raeburn were married. And although there was felt, by the most careless heart, to be something sad and solemn in such nup-

tials, yet Allan made his marriage-day one of sober cheerfulness in his native village. Fanny wore her white ribbands in the very way that used to be pleasant to Allan's eyes; and blind as he now was, these eyes kindled with a joyful smile, when he turned the clear sightless orbs towards his bride, and saw her within his soul arrayed in the simple white dress which he heard all about him saying so well became her sweet looks. Her relations and his own partook of the marriage-feast in their cottage—there was the sound of music and dancing feet on the little green plat at the foot of the garden, by the river's side—the bride's youngest sister, who was henceforth to be an inmate in the house, remained when the party went away in the quiet of the evening—and peace, contentment, and love, folded their wings together over that humble dwelling.

From that day Allan and his wife were perfectly happy—and they could not help wondering at their former fears. There was, at once, a general determination formed all over the parish to do them every benefit. Fanny, who had always been distinguished for her skill and fancy as a sempstress, became now quite the fashionable dress-maker of the village, and had more employment offered than she could accept. So that her industry alone was more than sufficient for all their present wants. But Allan, though blind, was not idle. He immediately began to instruct himself in various departments of a blind man's work.—

A loom was purchased; and in a few weeks he was heard singing to the sound of his fly-shuttle as merry as the bull-finch in the cage that hung at the low window of his room. He was not long in finding out the way of plaiting rush-rugs and wicker-baskets—the figures of all of which were soon, as it were, visible through his very fingers; and before six months were over, Allan Bruce and his wife were said to be getting rich, and a warm blessing broke from every heart upon them, and their virtuous and unrepining industry.

Allan had always been fond of music, and his voice was the finest tenor in all the kirk. So he began in the evenings of winter to teach a school for sacred music—and thus every hour was turned to account. Allan repined not now—nay at times he felt as if his blindness were a blessing—for it forced him to trust to his own soul—to turn for comfort to the best and purest human affections—and to see God always.

Whatever misgivings of mind Allan Bruce might have experienced—whatever faintings and sickenings and deadly swoons of despair might have overcome his heart,—it was not long before he was a freedman from all their slavery. He was not immured, like many as worthy as he, in an Asylum; he was not an incumbrance upon a poor father, sitting idle and in the way of others, beside an ill-fed fire, and a scanty board; he was not forced to pace step by step along the lamp-lighted streets and squares of a city, forcing out beau-

tiful music to gain a few pieces of coin from passers by entranced for a moment by sweet sounds plaintive or jocund; he was not a boy-led beggar along the high-way under the sickening sunshine or the chilling sleet, with an abject hat abjectly protruded with a cold heart for colder charity;—but he was, although he humbly felt and acknowledged that he was in nothing more worthy than these, a man loaded with many blessings, warmed by a constant ingle, laughed round by a flock of joyful children, love-tended and love-lighted by a wife who was to him at once music and radiance,—while his house stood in the middle of a village of which all the inhabitants were his friends, and of all whose hands the knock was known when it touched his door, and of all whose voices the tone was felt when it kindly accosted him in the wood, in the field, in the garden, by the river's side, by the hospitable board of a neighbour, or in the Churchyard assemblage before entering into the House of God.

Thus did years pass along. Children were born to them—lived—were healthy—and well-behaved. A blessing rested upon them and all that belonged to them, and the name of "Blind Allan" carried with it far and near an authority that could belong only to virtue, piety, and faith tried by affliction and found to stand fast.

Ten years ago, when they married, Allan Bruce and Fanny Raeburn were among the poorest of the

poor, and had it pleased God to send sickness among them, hard had been their lot. But now they lived in a better house—with a larger garden—and a few fields, with two cows of their own.—Allan had workmen under him, a basket-maker now on a considerable scale—and his wife had her apprentices too, the best dress-maker all the country round. They were rich. Their children were at school,—and all things, belonging both to outer and inner life, had prospered to their hearts' desire. Allan could walk about many familiar places unattended; but that seldom happened, for while his children were at school he was engaged in his business; and when they came home, there was always a loving contest among them who should be allowed to take hold of their father's hand when he went out on his evening walk. Well did he know the tread of each loving creature's footstep—their very breath when their voices were silent. One touch of a head as it danced past him, or remained motionless by his side—one pressure of an arm upon his knee—one laugh from a corner, was enough to tell him which of his children was there; and in their most confused noise and merriment, his ear would have known if one romping imp had been away. So perfectly accustomed had he long been to his situation, that it might almost be said that he was unconscious of being blind, or that he had forgotten that his eyes once saw. Long had Allan Bruce indeed been the happiest of the blind.

It chanced at this time, that, among a party who

were visiting his straw manufactory, there was a surgeon celebrated for his skill in operations upon the eye, who expressed an opinion that Allan's sight might be at least partially restored, and offered not only to perform the operation, but if Allan would reside for some weeks in Edinburgh, to see him every day, till it was known whether his case was or was not a hopeless one. Allan's circumstances were now such as to make a few weeks, or even months confinement of no importance to him; and though he said to his wife that he was averse to submit to an operation that might disturb the long formed quiet and contentment of his mind by hopes never to be realized, yet those hopes of once more seeing Heaven's dear light gradually removed all his repugnance. His eyes were couched, and when the bandages were removed, and the soft broken light let in upon him, Allan Bruce was no longer among the number of the blind.

There was no uncontroulable burst of joy in the soul of Allan Bruce when once more a communication was opened between it and the visible world. For he had learned lessons of humility and temperance in all his emotions during ten years of blindness, in which the hope of light was too faint to deserve the name. He was almost afraid to believe that his sight was restored. Grateful to him was its first uncertain and wavering glimmer, as a draught of water to a wretch in a crowded dungeon. But he knew not whether

it was to ripen into the perfect day, or gradually to fade back again into the depth of his former darkness.

But when his Fanny—she on whom he had so loved to look when she was a maiden in her teens, and who would not forsake him in the first misery of that great affliction, but had been overjoyed to link the sweet freedom of her prime to one sitting in perpetual dark—when she, now a staid and lovely matron, stood before him with a face pale in bliss, and all drenched in the floodlike tears of an unsupportable happiness—then truly did he feel what a heaven it was to see! And as he took her to his heart, he gently bent back her head, that he might devour with his eyes that benign beauty which had for so many years smiled upon him unbeheld, and which now that he had seen once more, he felt that he could even at that very moment die in peace.

In came with soft steps, one after another, his five loving children, that for the first time they might be seen by their Father. The girls advanced timidly, with blushing cheeks and bright shining hair, while the boys went boldly up to his side, and the eldest, looking in his face, exclaimed with a shout of joy, "Our Father sees!—our Father sees!"—and then checking his rapture, burst into tears. Many a vision had Allan Bruce framed to himself of the face and figure of one and all of his children. One, he had been told, was like himself—another the image of its mother—and Lucy, he understood, was a blended

likeness of them both. But now he looked upon them with the confused and bewildered joy of parental love, seeking to know and distinguish in the light the separate objects towards whom it yearned; and not till they spoke did he know their Christian names. But soon, soon, did the sweet faces of all his children seem, to his eyes, to answer well, each in its different loveliness, to the expression of the voices so long familiar to his heart.

Pleasant, too, no doubt, was that expansion of heart, that followed the sight of so many old friends and acquaintances, all of whom, familiar as he had long been with them in his darkness, one day's light now seemed to bring farther forward in his affection. They came towards him now with brighter satisfaction—and the happiness of his own soul gave a kinder expression to their demeanour, and represented them all as a host of human beings rejoicing in the joy of one single brother. Here was a young man, who, when he saw him last, was a little school-boy—here a man beginning to be bent with toil, and with a thoughtful aspect, who had been one of his own joyous and laughing fellow-labourers in field or at fair—here a man on whom, ten years before, he had shut his eyes in advanced but vigorous life, now sitting, with a white head, and supported on a staff—all this change he knew before, but now he saw it; and there was thus a somewhat sad, but an interesting, delightful, and impressive contrast and resemblance between the

past and the present, brought immediately before him by the removal of a veil. Every face around him—every figure—was instructive as well as pleasant; and humble as his sphere of life was, and limited its range, quite enough of chance and change was now submitted to his meditation, to give his character, which had long been thoughtful, a still more solemn cast, and a temper of still more homely and humble wisdom.

Nor did all the addition to his happiness come from human life. Once more he saw the heavens and the earth. By men in his lowly condition, nature is not looked on very often perhaps with poetical eyes. But all the objects of nature are in themselves necessarily agreeable and delightful; and the very colours and forms he now saw filled his soul with bliss. Not for ten dark years had he seen a cloud, and now they were piled up like castles in the summer heaven. Not for ten dark years had he seen the vaulted sky, and there it was now bending majestically in its dark, deep, serene azure, full of tenderness, beauty, and power. The green earth, with all its flowers, was now visible beneath his feet. A hundred gardens blossomed—a hundred hedge-rows ran across the meadow and up the sides of the hills—the dark grove of sycamore, shading the village church on its mount, stood tinged with a glitter of yellow light—and from one extremity of the village to the other, calm, fair, and unwavering, the smoke from all its chimneys went up to heaven on the dewy morning-air. He felt all this

just by opening his eye-lids. And in his gratitude to God he blessed the thatch of his own humble house, and the swallows that were twittering beneath its eaves.

Such, perhaps, were some of the feelings which Allan Bruce experienced on being restored to sight. But faint and imperfect must be every picture of man's inner soul. This, however, is true, that Allan Bruce now felt that his blindness had been to him, in many respects, a blessing. It had touched all hearts with kindness towards him and his wife when they were poor—it had kept his feet within the doors of his house, or within the gate of his garden, often when they might otherwise have wandered into less happy and innocent places—it turned to him the sole undivided love of his sweet contented Fanny—it gave to the filial tenderness of his children something of fondest passion—and it taught him moderation in all things, humility, reverence, and perfect resignation to the Divine Will. It may, therefore, be truly said, that when the blameless man once more lifted up his seeing eyes, in all things he beheld God.

Soon after this time, a small Nursery-garden between Roslin and Lasswade,—a bank sloping down gently to the Esk—was on sale, and Allan Bruce was able to purchase it. Such an employment seemed peculiarly fitted for him, and also compatible with his other profession. He had acquired, during his blindness, much useful information from the readings of

his wife or children; and having been a gardener in his youth, among his many other avocations, he had especially extended his knowledge respecting flowers, shrubs, and trees. Here he follows that healthy, pleasant, and intelligent occupation. Among his other assistant Gardeners there is one man with a head white as snow, but a ruddy and cheerful countenance, who, from his self-importance, seems to be the proprietor of the garden. This is Allan's Father, who lives in a small cottage adjoining—takes care of all the gardening tools—and is master of the bee-hives. His old mother, too, is sometimes seen weeding; but oftener with her grandchildren, when in the evenings, after school, they are playing on the green plat by the Sun Dial, with flowers garlanded round their heads, or feeding the large trout in the clear silvery well near the roots of the celebrated Pear Tree.

LILIAS GRIEVE.

THERE was fear and melancholy in all the glens and valleys that lay stretching around, or down upon St Mary's Loch, for it was the time of religious persecution. Many a sweet cottage stood untenanted on the hill side and in the hollow; some had felt the fire and been consumed, and violent hands had torn off the turf-roof from the green shealing of the shepherd. In the wide and deep silence and solitariness of the mountains it seemed as if human life were nearly extinct. Caverns and clefts in which the fox had kenneled were now the shelter of Christian souls—and when a lonely figure crept stealingly from one hiding-place to another, on a visit of love to some hunted brother in faith, the crows would hover over him, and the hawk shriek at human steps now rare in the desert. When the babe was born there might be none near to baptize it, or the minister, driven from his kirk, perhaps poured the sacramental water upon its face from some pool in the glen whose rocks guarded the persecuted family from the oppressor. Bridals now were unfre-

quent, and in the solemn sadness of love. Many died before their time of minds sunken and of broken hearts. White hair was on heads long before they were old; and the silver locks of ancient men were often ruefully soiled in the dust and stained with their martyred blood.

But this is the dark side of the picture. For, even in their caves were these people happy. Their children were with them, even like the wild-flowers that blossomed all about the entrances of their dens. And when the voice of psalms rose up from the profound silence of the solitary place of rocks, the ear of God was open, and they knew that their prayers and praises were heard in Heaven. If a child was born, it belonged unto the faithful; if an old man died, it was in the religion of his forefathers. The hidden powers of their souls were brought forth into the light, and they knew the strength that was in them for these days of trial. The thoughtless became sedate—the wild were tamed—the unfeeling made compassionate—hard hearts were softened, and the wicked saw the error of their ways. All deep passion purifies and strengthens the soul, and so was it now. Now was shown and put to the proof, the stern, austere, impenetrable strength of men, that would neither bend nor break—the calm, serene determination of matrons, who, with meek eyes, and unblanched cheeks, met the scowl of the murderer—the silent beauty of maidens, who, with smiles received their death—and the mysterious courage of

children, who, in the inspiration of innocent and spotless nature, kneeled down among the dew-drops on the green sward, and died fearlessly by their parents' sides. Arrested were they at their work, or in their play, and with no other bandage over their eyes, but haply some clustering ringlet of their sunny hair, did many a sweet creature of twelve summers ask just to be allowed to say her prayers, and then go unappalled from her cottage-door to the breast of her Redeemer.

In those days had old Samuel Grieve and his spouse suffered sorely for their faith. But they left not their own house, willing to die there, or to be slaughtered, whenever God should so appoint. They were now childless; but a little grand-daughter, about ten years old, lived with them, and she was an orphan. The thought of death was so familiar to her, that although sometimes it gave a slight quaking throb to her heart in its glee, yet it scarcely impaired the natural joyfulness of her girlhood, and often unconsciously, after the gravest or the saddest talk with her old parents, would she glide off with a lightsome step, a blythe face, and a voice humming sweetly some cheerful tune. The old people looked often upon her in her happiness, till their dim eyes filled with tears; while the grandmother said, " If this nest were to be destroyed at last, and our heads in the mould, who would feed this young bird in the wild, and where would she find shelter in which to fauld her bonnie wings?"

Lilias Grieve was the Shepherdess of a small flock,

among the green pasturage at the head of St Mary's Loch, and up the hill side, and over into some of the little neighbouring glens. Sometimes she sat in that beautiful church-yard, with her sheep lying scattered around her upon the quiet graves, where, on still sunny days, she could see their shadows in the water of the Loch, and herself sitting close to the low walls of the House of God. She had no one to speak to, but her Bible to read; and day after day the rising sun beheld her in growing beauty, and innocence that could not fade, happy and silent as a Fairy upon the knowe, with the blue heavens over her head, and the blue lake smiling at her feet.

"My Fairy," was the name she bore by the cottage fire, where the old people were gladdened by her glee, and turned away from all melancholy thoughts. And it was a name that suited sweet Lilias well; for she was clothed in a garb of green, and often, in her joy, the green graceful plants that grow among the hills were wreathed round her hair. So was she drest one Sabbath-day, watching her flock at a considerable distance from home, and singing to herself a Psalm in the solitary moor—when in a moment a party of soldiers were upon a mount on the opposite side of a narrow dell. Lilias was invisible as a green linnet upon the grass, but her sweet voice had betrayed her, and then one of the soldiers caught the wild gleam of her eyes, and as she sprung frightened to her feet, he called out "A roe—a roe—see how she bounds along

the bent," and the ruffian took aim at the child with his musquet, half in sport, half in ferocity. Lilias kept appearing and disappearing, while she flew as on wings across a piece of black heathery moss full of pits and hollows—and still the soldier kept his musquet at its aim. His comrades called to him to hold his hand, and not shoot a poor little innocent child, but he at length fired, and the bullet was heard to whiz past her fern-crowned head, and to strike a bank which she was about to ascend. The child paused for a moment, and looked back, and then bounded away over the smooth turf; till like a cushat, she dropt into a little birchen glen, and disappeared. Not a sound of her feet was heard—she seemed to have sunk into the ground—and the soldier stood, without any effort to follow her, gazing through the smoke towards the spot where she had vanished.

A sudden superstition assailed the hearts of the party, as they sat down together upon a ledge of stone. "Saw you her face, Riddle, as my ball went whizzing past her ear—curse me, if she be not one of those hill Fairies, else she had been dead as a herring—but I believe the bullet glanced off her yellow hair as against a buckler." "By St George, it was the act of a gallows-rogue to fire upon the creature, Fairy or not Fairy, and you deserve the weight of this hand, the hand of an Englishman, you brute—for your cruelty"—and up rose the speaker to put his threat into execution, when the other retreated some distance, and

began to load his musquet—but the Englishman ran upon him, and, with a Cumberland gripe and trip, laid him upon the hard ground with a force that drove the breath out of his body, and left him stunned and almost insensible. "That serves him right, Allan Sleigh—shiver my timbers, if I would fire upon a petticoat. As to Fairies, why, look ye, 'tis a likely place enow for such creatures—if this be one, it is the first I ever saw—but as to your mermaids, I have seen a score of them, at different times, when I was at sea. As to shooting at them—no—no—we never tried that, or the ship would have gone to the bottom. There have I seen them sitting on a rock, with a looking-glass, combing their hair, that wrapped round them like a net, and then down into a coral cave in a jiffey to their mermans—for mermaid, fairy, or mere flesh and blood woman, they are all the same in that respect—take my word for it."

The fallen ruffian now rose somewhat humbled, and sullenly sat down among the rest. "Why," quoth Allan Sleigh, "I wager you a week's pay you don't venture fifty yards, without your musket, down yonder shingle where the fairy disappeared;"—and the wager being accepted, the half-drunken fellow rushed on towards the head of the glen, and was heard crashing away through the shrubs. In a few minutes he returned—declaring with an oath that he had seen her at the mouth of a cave where no human foot could reach, standing with her hair all on fire, and an angry

countenance, and that he had tumbled backwards into the burn and been nearly drowned.—"Drowned!" cried Allan Sleigh. "Aye drowned—why not? a hundred yards down that bit glen the pools are as black as pitch and as deep as hell, and the water roars like thunder—drowned—why not, you English son of a deer-stealer?" "Why not—because who was ever drowned that was born to be hanged?" And that jest caused universal laughter—as it is always sure to do, often as it may be repeated, in a company of ruffians, such is felt to be its perfect truth and unanswerable simplicity.

After an hour's quarrelling, and gibing, and mutiny, this disorderly band of soldiers proceeded on their way down into the head of Yarrow, and there saw in the solitude the house of Samuel Grieve. Thither they proceeded to get some refreshment, and ripe for any outrage that any occasion might suggest. The old man and his wife hearing a tumult of many voices and many feet came out, and were immediately saluted with many opprobrious epithets. The hut was soon rifled of any small articles of wearing apparel, and Samuel, without emotion, set before them whatever provisions he had, butter, cheese, bread, and milk—and hoped they would not be too hard upon old people, who were desirous of dying, as they had lived, in peace. Thankful were they both in their parental hearts that their little Lilias was among the hills; and the Old Man trusted, that if she returned before the soldiers

were gone, she would see from some distance their muskets on the green before the door, and hide herself among the brakens.

The soldiers devoured their repast with many oaths, and much hideous and obscene language, which it was sore against the Old Man's soul to hear in his own hut; but he said nothing, for that would have been wilfully to sacrifice his life. At last one of the party ordered him to return thanks in words impious and full of blasphemy, which Samuel calmly refused to do, beseeching them, at the same time, for the sake of their own souls, not so to offend their great and bountiful Preserver. "Confound the old canting Covenanter, I will prick him with my bayonet if he won't say grace;" and the blood trickled down the Old Man's cheek, from a slight wound on his forehead. The sight of it seemed to awaken the dormant blood-thirstiness in the tiger-heart of the soldier, who now swore, if the Old Man did not instantly repeat the words after him, he would shoot him dead. And, as if cruelty were contagious, almost the whole party agreed that the demand was but reasonable, and that the old hypocritical knave must preach or perish. "Damn him," cried one of them in a fury, "here is the Word of God, a great musty Bible, stinking of greasy black leather, worse than a whole tanyard. If he won't speak, I will gag him with a vengeance. Here, old Mr Peden the prophet, let me cram a few chapters of St Luke down your maw. St

Luke was a physician, I believe. Well, here is a dose of him. Open your jaws." And with these words he tore a handful of leaves out of the Bible, and advanced towards the Old Man, from whose face his terrified wife was now wiping off the blood.

Samuel Grieve was nearly fourscore; but his sinews were not yet relaxed, and in his younger days he had been a man of great strength. When, therefore, the soldier grasped him by the neck, the sense of receiving an indignity from such a slave made his blood boil, and, as if his youth had been renewed, the grey-headed man, with one blow, felled the ruffian to the floor.

That blow sealed his doom. There was a fierce tumult and yelling of wrathful voices, and Samuel Grieve was led out to die. He had witnessed such butchery of others—and felt that the hour of his martyrdom was come. "As thou didst reprove Simon Peter in the garden, when he smote the High Priest's servant, and saidst, 'The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'—So now, O my Redeemer, do thou pardon me, thy frail and erring follower, and enable me to drink this cup!" With these words the Old Man knelt down unbidden; and, after one solemn look to Heaven, closed his eyes, and folded his hands across his breast.

His wife now came forward, and knelt down beside the Old Man. "Let us die together, Samuel; but oh! what will become of our dear Lilias?" "God tem-

pers the wind to the shorn lamb," said her husband, opening not his eyes, but taking her hand into his, "Sarah—be not afraid." Oh! Samuel, I remember, at this moment, these words of Jesus, which you this morning read. "Forgive them, Father, they know not what they do!"—"We are all sinners together," said Samuel, with a loud voice—"we two old grey-headed people on our knees, and about to die, both forgive you all as we hope ourselves to be forgiven. We are ready—be merciful, and do not mangle us. Sarah, be not afraid."

It seemed that an angel was sent down from Heaven to save the lives of these two old grey-headed folk. With hair floating in sunny light, and seemingly wreathed with flowers of heavenly azure, with eyes beaming lustre, and yet streaming tears, with white arms extended in their beauty, and motion gentle and gliding as the sunshine when a cloud is rolled away, came on over the meadow before the hut the same green-robed Creature that had startled the soldiers with her singing in the moor, and crying loudly, but still sweetly, "God sent me hither to save their lives." She fell down beside them as they knelt together; and then, lifting up her head from the turf, fixed her beautiful face, instinct with fear, love, hope, and the spirit of prayer, upon the eyes of the men about to shed that innocent blood.

They all stood heart-stricken; and the executioners flung down their muskets upon the green-sward.

"God bless you, kind good soldiers, for this," exclaimed the child, now weeping and sobbing with joy, "Aye—aye—you will be all happy to-night, when you lie down to sleep. If you have any little daughters or sisters like me, God will love them for your mercy to us, and nothing, till you return home, will hurt a hair of their heads. Oh! I see now that soldiers are not so cruel as we say!" "Lilias, your grandfather speaks unto you;—his last words are—leave us—leave us—for they are going to put us to death. Soldiers, kill not this little child, or the waters of the loch will rise up and drown the sons of perdition. Lilias, give us each a kiss—and then go into the house."

The soldiers conversed together for a few minutes, and seemed now like men themselves condemned to die. Shame and remorse for their coward cruelty smote them to the core—and they bade them that were still kneeling to rise up and go their ways,—then, forming themselves into regular order, one gave the word of command, and, marching off, they soon disappeared. The Old Man, his Wife, and little Lilias, continued for some time on their knees in prayer, and then they all three went into their hut—the child between them,—and a withered hand of each laid upon its beautiful and its fearless head.

THE COVENANTER'S MARRIAGE-DAY.

THE Marriage Party were to meet in a little lonesome dell, well known to all the dwellers round St Mary's Loch. A range of bright green hills goes southward from its shores, and between them and the high heathery mountains lies a shapeless scene of cliffs, moss, and pasture, partaking both of the beauty and the grandeur between which it so wildly lies. All these cliffs are covered with native birch-trees, except a few of the loftiest that shoot up their bare points in many fantastic forms; that moss, full of what the shepherds call "hags," or hollows worn by the weather, or dug out for fuel, waves, when the wind goes by, its high rich-blossomed and fragrant heath; and that pasturage, here and there in circular spots of emerald verdure, affords the sweetest sustenance to the sheep to be found among all that mountainous region. It was in one of these circles of beautiful herbage, called by the Shepherds "The Queen-Fairy's Parlour," that Mark Kerr and Christian Lindsay, who had been long betrothed, were now to be made man and

wife. It was nearly surrounded by large masses, or ledges of loose rocks, piled to a considerable height upon each other by some strong convulsion, and all adorned with the budding and sweet breathing birches, while the circle was completed by one overshadowing cliff that sheltered it from the north blast, and on whose airy summit the young hawks were shrilly and wildly crying in their nest.

The bridegroom was sitting there with his bride, and her bridesmaid; and by and by, one friend after another appeared below the natural arch that, all dropping with wild flowers, formed the only entrance into this lonely Tabernacle. At last they all stood up in a circle together—shepherds decently apparelled,—shepherdesses all dressed in raiment bleached whiter than the snow in the waters of the mountain-spring, and the grey-headed Minister of God, who, driven from his kirk by blood-thirsty persecution, prayed and preached in the wilderness, baptized infants with the water of the running brook, and joined in wedlock the hands of those whose hearts longed to be united in those dark and deadly times. Few words were uttered by the gracious old man; but these few were solemn and full of cheer, impressed upon the hearts of the wedded pair, by the tremulous tones of a voice that was not long for this world, by the sanctity of his long white locks unmoved by a breath of air, and by the fatherly and apostolical motion of his uplifted hand, that seemed to conduct down upon them who

stood in awe before him the blessing of that God who delighteth in a humble heart. The short ceremony was now closed,—and Mark Kerr and Christian Lindsay were united, till death should sunder them on earth to reunite them in heaven.

Greetings were interchanged,—and smiles went round, with rosy blushes, and murmuring and whispering voices of irreproachable mirth. What though the days were dark, and the oppressor strong? Here was a place unknown to his feet; and now was a time to let the clear sparkling fountain of nature's joy well up in all hearts. Sadness and sorrow overshadowed the land; but human life was not yet wholly a waste; and the sweet sunshine that now fell down through a screen of fleecy clouds upon the Queen-Fairy's Parlour, was it not to enliven and rejoice all their souls? Was it not to make the fair bride fairer in her husband's eyes—her smile brighter, and the ringlets more yellow as they hung over a forehead that wore its silken snood no longer, but in its changed covering gracefully showed that Marion Lindsay was now a wife? The tabor and the pipe were heard; and footsteps, that left no print on the hard smooth verdant floor, kept time to the merry measures. Perhaps the old man would have frowned on such pastime—perhaps Covenanters ought not to have indulged in promiscuous dancing—perhaps it may be said to be false that they did so;—but the Minister had gone now to his own hiding-place. These Covenanters were

young, and this occasion was a happy one; and dance they did, most assuredly, wicked as it may have been, and improper as it may be to record such wickedness. The young hawks were not a little alarmed; and an old ram, who happened to put in his twisted horns below the arch, got a fright, that made him bound backwards out of the enchanted circle. The hill black-bird wondered; but he himself joined the dance upon the birchen spray—and although no great songster, he did his best, and chirped cheerfully his mellow notes in the din of the general happiness.

But as the evening hours were advancing, the Party kept dropping away one by one, or in pairs, just as it had gathered; and the Fairy Queen had her Parlour all to herself undisturbed, if she chose at night to hold a court beneath the lamp of the Moon.

Where had the young married pair their bridal chamber? Mark Kerr had a shealing on the mountain-side, from which was just visible one bay of St Mary's Loch. The walls were built of turf, and the roof of heather—and surrounded as it was on all sides by large stones, wooded cliffs, knowes, and uneven eminences, it was almost as likely to escape notice as the nest of a bird, or the lair of a roe. Thither he took his bride. Her little bridesmaid had a small covert of her own, distant only a few roods, and the friends could see each other standing at the door of each shealing, through the intercepting foliage of the

waving birches that hung down their thin and ineffectual veil till it swept the blooming heather.

On a small seat, framed of the roots of decayed trees, Mark Kerr was now sitting with his own sweet Christian; when he gently raised her head from his bosom, and told her to go into the shealing, for he saw people on the hillside, whose appearance, even at that distance, he did not like. Before a quarter of an hour had elapsed a party of soldiers were at hand. Mark knew that he had been observed for some time; and to attempt escape with his bride was impossible. So he rose up at their approach, and met them with a steady countenance, although there were both fear and sorrow in his heart. Marion had obeyed him, and the shealing was silent.

"Is your name Mark Kerr?" "Yes—that is my name." "Were you at Yarrow-Ford when a prisoner was rescued and a soldier murdered?" "I was—but did all I could to save that soldier's life." "You wolf, you mangled his throat with your own bloody fangs—but we have traced you to your den, and the ghost of Hugh Gemmel, who was as pleasant either with lad or lass as any boy that ever emptied a cup or had a fall upon heather, will shake hands with you by moonlight by and by. You may meet either in the church-yard, down by the Loch, where your canting Covenanters will bury you, or down at Yarrow-Kirk, where Hugh was put to bed with the worms, in his red coat, like a soldier as he was. By the Holy God of Israel—(is not

that a lump of your own slang?)—this bayonet shall drink a stoup of your heart's blood."

Mark Kerr knew, in a moment, that there was no hope of life. He had confessed being present on the occasion charged against him; and a sentence of death, which an angel's intercession could not have got reversed, was glaring in the eyes of all the soldiers. Each man seemed to kindle into fiercer fury as he caught the fiery eyes around him. Their oaths and execrations exasperated them all into frenzy; and a wild and perturbed sense of justice demanding expiation of their murdered comrade's blood, made them deaf and blind to every thing but the suggestions of their own irritated and inflamed hearts. A horrid sympathy possessed them all; and they were as implacable as a herd of wolves famished and in sight of their prey. There was no mercy in any one face there, else Mark Kerr would have appealed to that man, for his life was now sweet and precious, and it was a hard thing to die. "I know his face. He is the very man that stabbed Hugh when he was down with his own bayonet. How do you like that, sirrah?"—and one of the soldiers thrust his long bayonet through Mark's shoulder, till the point was seen at his back, and then drew it out smeared with blood, and returned it to its sheath, with a grin of half-glutted vengeance. The wounded man staggered at the blow and sat down, nearly fainting, upon the seat where a few minutes before his bride had leant her head upon his bosom. But he

uttered not a word, and kept his eyes fixed, not reproachfully, but somewhat sadly and with a faint expression of hope, on the men who seemed determined to be his executioners. The pain, the sickness, the sudden blasting of all his hopes, almost unmanned his resolute heart; and Mark Kerr would have now done much to save his life,—and something, perhaps, even at the expence of Conscience and Faith. But that weak mood was of short duration,—and the good and brave man braced up his heart to receive the doom of death.

Meanwhile one of the soldiers had entered the shealing, and brought out Marion in his grasp. A loud shout of laughter and scornful exultation followed. "Ho—ho—my Heath-Cock, you have got your bonny hen!—Catch a Covenanter without his comfort.—Is your name Grace, my bonny bairn?" Marion looked around, and saw Mark sitting pale and speechless, with his breast covered with clotted blood. She made no outcry, for grief, and pity, and consternation, struck her dumb. She could not move, for the soldier held her in his arms. But she looked in the ruffian's face with such an imploring countenance, that unconsciously he let her go, and then she went up tottering to poor Mark, and with her white bridal gown wiped off the gore from his breast, and kissed his clayey and quivering lips. She then ran to the spring that lay sparkling among its cresses, within a few yards of the shealing, and brought a handful of cold water,

which she sprinkled tenderly over his face. The human soul is a wild and terrible thing when inflamed with cruelty and revenge. The soldiers saw little more in all this than a subject for loathsome scurrility and ferocious merriment; and as Christian looked wildly round upon them, one asked, "Are you his sister—his cousin—or his drab?" "Oh! soldiers—soldiers—I am his wife—this blessed day was I married to him. If any of you are married men, think of your wives now at home—remember the day they were brides, and do not murder us quite—if, indeed, my Mark is not already murdered." "Come, come, Mrs Sweet-lips, no more whining—you shall not want a husband. I will marry you myself, and so I daresay will the serjeant there, and also the corporal. Now you have had indulgence enough—so stand back a bit; and do you, good Master Paleface, come forward, and down upon your marrow bones." Mark, with great difficulty, rose up, and knelt down as he was ordered.

He had no words to say to his bride; nor almost did he look at her—so full was his soul of her image, and of holy grief for the desolation in which she would be left by his death. The dewy breath of her gentle and pure kisses was yet in his heart; and the happy sighs of maidenly tenderness were now to be changed into groans of incurable despair. Therefore it was, that he said nothing as he knelt down, but his pallid

lips moved in prayer, and she heard her name indistinctly uttered between those of God and Christ.

Christian Lindsay had been betrothed to him for several years, and nothing but the fear of some terrible evil like this had kept them so long separate. Dreadful, therefore, as this hour was, their souls were not wholly unprepared for it, although there is always a miserable difference between reality and mere imagination. She now recalled to her mind, in one comprehensive thought, their years of innocent and youthful affection; and then the holy words so lately uttered by the Old Man in that retired place, alas! called by too vain a name, "The Queen-Fairy's Parlour!" The tears began now to flow—they both wept—for this night was Mark Kerr's head to lie, not on her bosom, but in the grave, or unburied on the ground. In that agony, what signified to her all the insulting, hideous, and inhuman language of these licentious murderers? They fell off her soul, without a stain, like polluted water off the plumage of some fair sea-bird. And as she looked on her husband upon his knees, awaiting his doom, him the temperate, the merciful, the gentle, and the just, and then upon those wrathful, raging, fiery-eyed, and bloody-minded men, are they, thought her fainting heart, of the same kind? are they framed by one God? and hath Christ alike died for them all?

She lifted up her eyes, full of prayers, for one moment to heaven, and then, with a cold shudder of de-

sertion, turned them upon her husband, kneeling with a white fixed countenance, and half dead already with the loss of blood. A dreadful silence had succeeded to that tumult; and she dimly saw a number of men drawn up together without moving, and their determined eyes held fast upon their victim. "Think, my lads, that it is Hugh Gemmel's Ghost that commands you now," said a deep hoarse voice—"no mercy did the holy men of the mountains show to him when they smashed his skull with large stones from the channel of the Yarrow. Now for revenge."

The soldiers presented their muskets—the word was given—and they fired. At that moment Christian Lindsay had rushed forward and flung herself down on her knees beside her husband, and they both fell, and stretched themselves out mortally wounded upon the grass.

During all this scene, Marion Scott, the bridesmaid, a girl of fifteen, had been lying affrighted among the brackens within a hundred yards of the murder. The agony of grief now got the better of the agony of fear, and, leaping up from her concealment, she rushed into the midst of the soldiers, and, kneeling down beside her dear Christian Lindsay, lifted up her head, and shaded the hair from her forehead. "Oh! Christian, your eyes are opening—do you hear me—do you hear me speaking?" "Yes, I hear a voice—is it yours Mark?—speak again." "Oh! Christian, it is only my voice—poor Marion's." "Is Mark dead

—quite dead?" And there was no reply; but Christian must have heard the deep gasping sobs that were rending the child's heart. Her eyes, too, opened more widely, and misty as they were, they saw, indeed, close by her, the huddled up, mangled, and bloody body of her husband.

The soldiers stood, like so many beasts of prey, who had gorged their fill of blood; their rage was abated —and they offered no violence to the affectionate child, as she continued to sit before them, with the head of Christian Lindsay in her lap, watering it with tears, and moaning so as to touch, at last, some even of their hardened hearts. When blood is shed it soon begins to appear a fearful sight to the shedders—and the hand soon begins to tremble that has let out human life. Cruelty cannot sustain itself in presence of that rueful colour, and remorse sees it reddening into a more ghastly hue. Some of the soldiers turned away in silence, or with a half-suppressed oath—others strayed off among the trees, and sat down together; and none would now have touched the head of pretty little Marion. The man whom they had shot deserved death—so they said to one another—and he had got it; but the woman's death was accidental, and they were not to blame because she had run upon their fire. So, before the smell and the smoke of the gunpowder had been carried away by the passing breeze from that place of murder, all were silent, and could hardly bear to look one another in the face.

Their work had been lamentable indeed. For now they began to see that these murdered people were truly bridegroom and bride. She was lying there dressed with her modest white bridal garments and white ribbands, now streaked with many streams of blood from mortal wounds. So, too, was she who was supporting her head. It was plain that a bridal party had been this very day—and that their hands had prepared for a happy and affectionate newly wedded pair that bloody bed, and a sleep from which there was to be no awaking at the voice of morn. They stood looking appalled on the bodies, while, on the wild flowers around them, which the stain of blood had not yet reached, loudly and cheerfully were murmuring the mountain-bees.

Christian Lindsay was not quite dead, and she at last lifted herself up a little way out of Marion's lap, and then falling down with her arms over her husband's neck, uttered a few indistinct words of prayer, and expired.

Marion Scott had never seen death before, and it was now presented to her in its most ghastly and fearful shape. Every horror she had ever heard talked of in the hiding places of her father and relations was now realized before her eyes, and for anything she knew, it was now her turn to die. Had she dreamed in her sleep of such a trial, her soul would have died within her,—and she would have convulsively shrieked aloud on her bed. But the pale, placid, happy-

looking face of dead Christian Lindsay, whom she had loved as an elder sister, and who had always been so good to her from the time she was a little child, inspired her now with an utter fearlessness—and she could have knelt down to be shot by the soldiers without one quickened pulsation at her heart. But now the soldiers were willing to leave the bloody green, and their leader told Marion she might go her ways and bring her friends to take care of the dead bodies. No one, he said, would hurt her. And soon after, the party disappeared.

Marion remained for a while beside the dead. Their wounds bled not now. But she brought water from the little spring and washed them all decently, and left not a single stain upon either of their faces. She disturbed, as little as possible, the position in which they lay; nor removed Christian's arms from her husband's neck. She lifted one of the arms up for a moment to wipe away a spot of blood, but it fell down again of itself, and moved no more.

During all this time the setting sunlight was giving a deeper tinge to the purple heather, and as Marion lifted up her eyes to heaven she saw in the golden west the last relics of the day. All the wild was silent—not a sound was there but that of the night-hawk. And the darkening stillness touched Marion's young soul with a trembling superstition, as she looked at the dead bodies, then up to the uncertain sky and over the glimmering shades of the solitary glen. The poor

girl was half afraid of the deepening hush, and the gathering darkness. Yet the spirits of those she had so tenderly loved would not harm her; they had gone to Heaven. Could she find heart to leave them thus lying together?—Yes—there was nothing, she thought, to molest the dead. No raven inhabited this glen; nothing but the dews would touch them, till she went to the nearest hiding-place, and told her father or some other friends of the murder.

Before the Moon had risen, the same party that on the morning had been present at their marriage, had assembled on the hillside before the shealing where Mark Kerr and Christian Lindsay were now lifted up together on a heather-couch, and lying cold and still as in the grave. The few maids and matrons who had been in that happy scene in the Queen-Fairy's Parlour had not yet laid aside their white dresses, and the little starry ribband-knots, or bride's favours, were yet upon their breasts. The old Minister had come from his cave, and not for many years had he wept till now; but this was a case even for the tears of an old religious man of fourscore.

To watch by the dead all night, and to wait for some days till they could be coffined for burial, was not to be thought of in such times of peril. That would have been to sacrifice the living foolishly for the dead. The soldiers had gone. But they might—no doubt would return and scatter the funeral. Therefore it was no sooner proposed than agreed to in the afflicted

souls of them all, that the bridegroom and his bride should be buried even that very night in the clothes in which they had that morning been wedded. A bier was soon formed of the birch tree boughs; and with their faces meekly looking up to Heaven, now filled with moonlight, they were borne along in sobbing silence, up the hills and down along the glens, till the party stood together in the lone burial-ground, at the head of St Mary's Loch. A grave was dug for them there, but that was not their own burial-place. For Mark Kerr's father and mother lay in the church-yard of Melrose, and the parents of Christian Lindsay slept in that of Bothwell, near the flow of the beautiful Clyde. The grave was half filled with heather, and gently were they let down together, even as they were found lying on the green before their shealing, into that mournful bed. The Old Man afterwards said a prayer—not over them—but with the living. Then sitting down on the graves, and on the grave-stones, they spoke of the virtues of the dead. They had, it is true, been cut off in their youthful prime; but many happy days and years had been theirs—their affection for each other had been a pleasant solace to them in toil, poverty, and persecution. This would have been a perplexing day to those who had not faith in God's perfect holiness and mercy. But all who mourned now together were wholly resigned to his dispensations, and soon all eyes were dried. In solemn silence they all quitted the church-yard, and then the funeral

party, which a few hours ago had been a marriage one, dissolved among the hills and glens and rocks, and left Mark Kerr and Christian Lindsay to everlasting rest.

THE BAPTISM.

It is a pleasant and impressive time, when, at the close of divine service, in some small country church, there takes place the gentle stir and preparation for a Baptism. A sudden air of chearfulness spreads over the whole congregation; the more solemn expression of all countenances fades away; and it is at once felt, that a rite is about to be performed, which, although of a sacred and awful kind, is yet connected with a thousand delightful associations of purity, beauty, and innocence. Then there is an eager bending of smiling faces over the humble galleries—an unconscious rising up in affectionate curiosity—and a slight murmuring sound in which is no violation of the Sabbath sanctity of God's House, when in the middle passage of the church the party of women is seen, matrons and maids, who bear in their bosoms, or in their arms, the helpless beings about to be made members of the Christian Communion.

There sit, all dressed becomingly in white, the fond and happy baptismal group. The babies have been

entrusted, for a precious hour, to the bosoms of young maidens, who tenderly fold them to their yearning hearts, and with endearments taught by nature are stilling, not always successfully, their plaintive cries. Then the proud and delighted girls rise up, one after the other, in sight of the whole congregation, and hold up the infants, arrayed in neat caps and long flowing linen, into their fathers' hands. For the poorest of the poor, if he has a heart at all, will have his infant well dressed on such a day, even although it should scant his meal for weeks to come, and force him to spare fuel to his winter fire.

And now the fathers are all standing below the pulpit with grave and thoughtful faces. Each has tenderly taken his infant into his toil-hardened hands, and supports it in gentle and stedfast affection. They are all the children of poverty, and, if they live, are destined to a life of toil. But now poverty puts on its most pleasant aspect, for it is beheld standing before the altar of religion with contentment and faith. This is a time, when the better and deeper nature of every man must rise up within him; and when he must feel, more especially, that he is a spiritual and immortal being making covenant with God. He is about to take upon himself a holy charge; to promise to look after his child's immortal soul; and to keep its little feet from the paths of evil, and in those of innocence and peace. Such a thought elevates the lowest mind above itself—diffuses additional tender-

ness over the domestic relations, and makes them, who hold up their infants to the baptismal font, better fathers, husbands, and sons, by the deeper insight which they then possess into their nature and their life.

The Minister consecrates the water—and as it falls on his infant's face, the father feels the great oath in his soul. As the poor helpless creature is wailing in his arms, he thinks how needful indeed to human infancy is the love of Providence! And when after delivering each his child into the arms of the smiling maiden from whom he had received it, he again takes his place for admonition and advice before the pulpit, his mind is well disposed to think on the perfect beauty of that religion of whom the Divine Founder said, "Suffer little children to be brought unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven!"

The rite of Baptism had not thus been performed for several months in the Kirk of Lanark. It was now the hottest time of persecution; and the inhabitants of that parish found other places in which to worship God and celebrate the ordinances of religion. It was now the Sabbath-day,—and a small congregation of about a hundred souls had met for divine service in a place of worship more magnificent than any temple that human hands had ever built to Deity. Here, too, were three children about to be baptized. The congregation had not assembled to the toll of the bell,—but each heart knew the hour and observed it; for there are a hundred sun-dials among the hills.

woods, moors, and fields, and the shepherd and the peasant see the hours passing by them in sunshine and shadow.

The church in which they were assembled was hewn, by God's hand, out of the eternal rocks. A river rolled its way through a mighty chasm of cliffs, several hundred feet high, of which the one side presented enormous masses, and the other corresponding recesses, as if the great stone girdle had been rent by a convulsion. The channel was overspread with prodigious fragments of rock or large loose stones, some of them smooth and bare, others containing soil and verdure in their rents and fissures, and here and there crowned with shrubs and trees. The eye could at once command a long stretching vista, seemingly closed and shut up at both extremities by the coalescing cliffs. This majestic reach of river contained pools, streams, rushing shelves and waterfalls innumerable; and when the water was low, which it now was in the common drought, it was easy to walk up this scene, with the calm blue sky overhead, an utter and sublime solitude. On looking up, the soul was bowed down by the feeling of that prodigious height of unscaleable and often overhanging cliff. Between the channel and the summit of the far extended precipices were perpetually flying rooks and wood-pigeons, and now and then a hawk, filling the profound abyss with their wild cawing, deep murmur, or shrilly shriek. Sometimes a heron would stand erect and still on some

little stone island, or rise up like a white cloud along the black walls of the chasm, and disappear. Winged creatures alone could inhabit this region. The fox and wild cat chose more accessible haunts. Yet here came the persecuted Christians and worshipped God, whose hand hung over their heads those magnificent pillars and arches, scooped out those galleries from the solid rock, and laid at their feet the calm water in its transparent beauty, in which they could see themselves sitting in reflected groups, with their Bibles in their hands.

Here, upon a semicircular ledge of rocks, over a narrow chasm, of which the tiny stream played in a murmuring waterfall, and divided the congregation into two equal parts, sat about a hundred persons, all devoutly listening to their Minister, who stood before them on what might well be called a small natural Pulpit of living stone. Up to it there led a short flight of steps, and over it waved the canopy of a tall graceful birch tree. This pulpit stood on the middle of the channel, directly facing that congregation, and separated from them by the clear deep sparkling pool into which the scarce heard water poured over the blackened rock. The water, as it left the pool, separated into two streams, and flowed on each side of that Altar, thus placing it in an island, whose large mossy stones were richly embowered under the golden blossoms and green tresses of the broom. Divine service was closed, and a row of maidens, all clothed in purest

white, came gliding off from the congregation, and crossing the stream on some stepping stones, arranged themselves at the foot of the pulpit, with the infants about to be baptized. The fathers of the infants, just as if they had been in their own Kirk, had been sitting there during worship, and now stood up before the Minister. The baptismal water, taken from that pellucid pool, was lying consecrated in a small hollow of one of the upright stones that formed one side or pillar of the pulpit, and the holy rite proceeded. Some of the younger ones in that semicircle kept gazing down into the pool, in which the whole scene was reflected, and now and then, in spite of the grave looks, or admonishing whispers of their elders, letting a pebble fall into the water, that they might judge of its depth from the length of time that elapsed before the clear air-bells lay sparkling on the agitated surface. The rite was over, and the religious service of the day closed by a Psalm. The mighty rocks hemmed in the holy sound, and sent it in a more compacted volume, clear, sweet, and strong, up to Heaven. When the Psalm ceased, an echo, like a spirit's voice, was heard dying away high up among the magnificent architecture of the cliffs, and once more might be noticed in the silence the reviving voice of the waterfall.

Just then a large stone fell from the top of the cliff into the pool, a loud voice was heard, and a plaid hung over on the point of a Shepherd's staff. Their watchful Sentinel had descried danger, and this was his warning.

Forthwith the congregation rose. There were paths dangerous to unpractised feet, along the ledges of the rocks, leading up to several caves and places of concealment. The more active and young assisted the elder—more especially the old Pastor, and the women with the infants; and many minutes had not elapsed, till not a living creature was visible in the channel of the stream, but all of them hidden, or nearly so, in the clefts and caverns.

The Shepherd who had given the alarm had lain down again in his plaid instantly on the green sward upon the summit of these precipices. A party of soldiers were immediately upon him, and demanded what signals he had been making, and to whom; when one of them, looking over the edge of the cliff, exclaimed, "See, see! Humphrey, we have caught the whole Tabernacle of the Lord in a net at last. There they are, praising God among the stones of the river Mouss. These are the Cartland Craigs. By my soul's salvation, a noble Cathedral!" "Fling the lying Sentinel over the cliffs. Here is a canting Covenanter for you, deceiving honest soldiers on the very Sabbath-day. Over with him, over with him—out of the gallery into the pit." But the Shepherd had vanished like a shadow; and mixing with the tall green broom and bushes, was making his unseen way towards a wood. "Satan has saved his servant; but come, my lads—follow me— I know the way down into the bed of the stream —and the steps up to Wallace's cave. They are called

the "Kittle Nine Stanes." The hunt's up.—We'll be all in at the death. Halloo—my boys—halloo!"

The soldiers dashed down a less precipitous part of the wooded banks, a little below the "craigs," and hurried up the channel. But when they reached the altar where the old grey-haired minister had been seen standing, and the rocks that had been covered with people, all was silent and solitary—not a creature to be seen. "Here is a Bible dropt by some of them," cried a soldier, and, with his foot, spun it away into the pool. "A bonnet—a bonnet,"—cried another —"now for the pretty sanctified face that rolled its demure eyes below it." But, after a few jests and oaths, the soldiers stood still, eyeing with a kind of mysterious dread the black and silent walls of the rock that hemmed them in, and hearing only the small voice of the stream that sent a profounder stillness through the heart of that majestic solitude. "Curse these cowardly Covenanters—what, if they tumble down upon our heads pieces of rock from their hiding-places? Advance? Or retreat?" There was no reply. For a slight fear was upon every man; musquet or bayonet could be of little use to men obliged to clamber up rocks, along slender paths, leading, they knew not where; and they were aware that armed men, now-a-days, worshipped God;—men of iron hearts, who feared not the glitter of the soldier's arms—neither barrel nor bayonet—men of long stride, firm step, and broad breast, who, on the open field, would have over-

thrown the marshalled line, and gone first and foremost if a city had to be taken by storm.

As the soldiers were standing together irresolute, a noise came upon their ears like distant thunder, but even more appalling; and a slight current of air, as if propelled by it, past whispering along the sweet-briars, and the broom, and the tresses of the birch-trees. It came deepening, and rolling, and roaring on, and the very Cartland Craigs shook to their foundation as if in an earthquake. "The Lord have mercy upon us—what is this?" And down fell many of the miserable wretches on their knees, and some on their faces, upon the sharp pointed rocks. Now, it was like the sound of many myriad chariots rolling on their iron axles down the stony channel of the torrent. The old grey-haired minister issued from the mouth of Wallace's Cave, and said, with a loud voice, "The Lord God terrible reigneth." A water-spout had burst up among the moorlands, and the river, in its power, was at hand. There it came—tumbling along into that long reach of cliffs, and in a moment filled it with one mass of waves. Huge agitated clouds of foam rode on the surface of a blood-red torrent. An army must have been swept off by that flood. The soldiers perished in a moment—but high up in the cliffs, above the sweep of destruction, were the Covenanters—men, women, and children, uttering prayers to God, unheard by themselves, in that raging thunder.

SIMON GRAY.



No man's life seemed to promise a calmer course and a more serene close than that of the Reverend Simon Gray. He had for many years possessed the entire affection and respect of all the inhabitants of his parish. A few words from him calmed angry blood, settled quarrels, and allayed animosity. In his kirk, in his manse, in his neighbour's house, in the field, and by the way-side, he was, in good truth, the minister of peace. In his own family his happiness was perfect. His wife was, in all things, after his own heart; and two sons and one daughter, just reaching man and woman's estate, had scarcely ever given their parents distress, and seemed destined for a life of respectability and happiness. But it is with the humble as with the high in this world; their possessions are equally insecure; and the same lesson may be learnt from the life of the lowliest peasant, as from that of the loftiest king. From the cottage and from the palace the same warning voice is heard to say, "Call no man happy till he dies."

Simon Gray's eldest son, a youth of distinguished talents, and even more tenderly beloved than admired by all who knew him, was drowned in a moorland loch in his father's parish, one warm summer evening, when his parents were sitting at no great distance, in a hollow among the hills. They heard his cries, but could do nothing to save him, when, rushing to the water's weedy and rushy edge, they saw him sinking in miserable entanglement among the long strong roots of the water-lilies. Of the shock their hearts and whole being then got, nothing need be said; but from that evening, well as they were both thought to support it, every one in the parish felt that they never were the same people as before, that their faces never wore such bright smiles, and that the minister and his wife often looked to each other when in company, with tearful eyes, as if an accidental word or allusion had awakened in their hearts a remembrance too tender or too terrible. Michael would have been, had he lived, his father's successor; and some thought that the manse never looked exactly like itself since that fatal event.

But this was but the beginning of Simon's sorrows. His other son was a clerk in a commercial house in the neighbouring city, and in the unreserved confidence of his employers. Regularly every Saturday did he walk out to the Manse—stay over the Sabbath—and next morning before breakfast appear at his desk. But one dark and stormy winter evening, in the middle of the week, he unexpectedly entered his father's

study, and flinging himself down upon his kness, declared that he was a ruined and lost man—that he had formed a guilty connection with a woman who had led him on to his destruction,—and that he had embezzled his benefactor's money—done worse—forged his name, and that, unless he could make his escape, he must expiate his crime on a scaffold.

Simon Gray lifted up his son from his knees, and folded him to his heart. "My poor wretched boy—thy life is in jeopardy! Oh! that I knew how to save my son! Stephen—Stephen—what would signify the breaking of my heart if thou wast but safe! Speak not—my sweet boy—of thy crimes, great as they are. I am thy father, and can now think but of thy death, and thy life. Fly, Stephen, and take with thee thy father's blessing. Perhaps all thy money is gone—I will give thee enough to pursue thy journey—and so also may I be able to repay all thou hast embezzled. O, Stephen—Stephen—my beloved boy, who hast so often sat in thine innocence on my knees, and whom so often I have put to bed after thy prayers, has it indeed come to this?" And father and son knelt down together and prayed unto their God. It was a black stormy night, and Stephen went away without seeing his mother or sister. He went away—but he never returned. He made his escape to America, and died, in a few weeks after his arrival, of the yellow fever.

The miserable father knew not how to break the

matter to his wife and daughter. They saw his affliction,—and he told them he feared Stephen was a profligate. But next night, the outer door opened loudly, and two officers of justice entered the manse. Now, all concealment was at an end; and next day it was known, not only to the inmates of the manse, but to all the inhabitants of the parish, that Stephen Gray was a criminal, and had fled to a foreign land.

Over the grave of the eldest son, his parents could shed tears of a resigned sadness; but for him who died untended beyond the sea, their grief was bitter and inconsolable. No one ever uttered Stephen's name, although there was not a house in all the parish where his cheerful laugh had not been welcome. Ill as he had behaved, dishonestly and vilely, affection for his memory was in every heart. But a grave look or a sigh was all in which any one could show this sorrow and sympathy now; and the minister of Seatoun understood the silence of his parishioners, for his dead son had been a felon—aye, Stephen, the gay, witty, fearless, and affectionate Stephen had been a felon. He had written a letter to his father on his death-bed —a few words—but they were impressed for ever on his father's soul, and often did he repeat them in his sleep, as the tears forced their way through his closed eyelids, and drenched his heaving breast.

The terror struck into the heart of Stephen's Sister by the sudden bursting in of the officers of justice into the manse, in some degree affected her intellects;

her memory from that night was impaired, and after her brother's death in America had been communicated to her, she frequently forgot it, and weeping, implored to know if he had not lately written home. "He must be dead, or he would have written;" and she kept walking about the house, from one room to another, repeating these words with a wailing voice and sorely wringing her hands. That could not last long; without any disease, she lay down on her bed, and never more rose. She was buried by the side of her brother Michael,—and now Simon Gray was childless.

Misfortunes, it is said, come in clouds; and indeed one is often not the forerunner merely, but the cause of another, till a single loss appears, on reflection, to have been the source of utter misery, ruin, and desolation. Each of these deaths took away a portion of Simon Gray's fortitude; but still, after a few months, he had carried over his whole awakened heart upon the survivor. Now there was no one left for a parent's love; and it was buried below the last slab that laid its weight on his family burial-place. To be sure, poor Stephen was not there—but he had his memorial too, beside his brother and sister, for his crimes had not divided him from one loving heart—and few but his parents' eyes looked on the stone that bore his name and the number of his years.

Under all these afflictions, Simon's wife seemed to bear herself up to the wonder of all who beheld her.

She attended to every thing about the house as before; none of her duties to the poor or rich among her parishioners were neglected; and but for her, it was said, that her husband must have sunk under his sorrows. But little do we know of each other's hearts. Simon Gray was disconsolate—miserable—despairing: but his health did not suffer—and he was able to discharge his ordinary duties as before, after a short suspension. She who administered comfort to him, sometimes in vain, needed it more even than himself; for her grief preyed inwardly, in the midst of that serene resignation, and struck in upon her very heart. Her strength decayed—she drew her breath with pain—and although no one, not even her medical attendants, feared immediate danger, yet one day she was found dead, sitting in a bower in the garden, to which she had retired to avoid the noon-day sun. Death had come gently into that bower, and touched her heart, perhaps in a slumber. Her head was reclining against the green leaves, and the Bible had not even fallen out of her hand.

The calamities that had befallen the Minister of Seatoun were as great as heart or imagination can conceive. Yet such calamities have been borne by many human beings, who have so far recovered from their shock as afterwards to enjoy some satisfaction in their existence. Men have we all known, with cheerful countenances, and apparently placid minds, whose best enjoyments have been sorely cut down; and who,

at one time, no doubt, thought and felt that for them, never more could there be one glimpse of joy upon this earth. But necessity is to many afflicted spirits, although a stern yet a sure comforter. The heart in its agonies of grief is rebellious, and strives to break asunder the fetters of its fate. But that mood cannot be sustained. It is irrational and impious, and the soul can find true rest only in resignation and submission. Then mingled motives to better and calmer thoughts arise.—Men see the wisdom and the virtue of a temperate sorrow,—the folly and the wickedness of outrageous grief. They begin to wish to obey the laws that ought to regulate the feelings of mortal creatures. In obeying them there is consolation, and a lightening of the sore burden of their distress. Then come blessed thoughts of the reward of the righteous who have gone to God—remembrances of all their beauty, innocence, or goodness, while they sojourned with us here;—and hope, faith, and belief that we shall yet meet them face to face, and be no more severed. Thus does time cure the wounds of the heart, just as it covers the grave with verdure and with flowers. We cannot, if we would, live without often sorrowing; but neither can we, if we would, sorrow always. God is kinder to us than we are to ourselves, and he lifts us up when, in blind passion, we would fain lie grovelling hopelessly in the dust.

So is it with many—perhaps with most men—but it is not so with all. It was not so with him of whom

we now speak. The death of his children he bore with resignation, and thought of them in peace. But when his soul turned from them to their mother it was suddenly disquieted; and day after day, week after week, and month after month, was it drawn with a more sickening and disconsolate passion of grief to her grave. An overwhelming tenderness for ever drowned his soul—haunted was he for ever by her image, dressed as he had never seen her, but as he knew she now was drest,—in a shroud. The silence of his room —of the whole house—of the garden—the glebe—and all the fields around, was insupportable: he prayed to forget her; and then, with a gush of tears, he prayed that he might never cease for one moment to think of her while he lived. Why, some one might have asked, was this man so distressed, so distracted, so infatuated in his grief? Who was she that had been taken from him? Did all the beauty of the skies, all the gladness of the earth, all affection, love, joy, and thought centre but in her alone? Had the mercy of God, and his bounty to this being whom he still supported, been utterly extinguished when the eyes of her whom he loved were closed in death? Who and what may she have been that must thus madly and hopelessly be for ever deplored?

To an indifferent heart, these questions could not have been satisfactorily answered. She who had died, and who was thus ceaselessly bewailed, was but one of many many, most worthy when known to be beloved,

but who, undistinguished among their fellow-creatures, live, and die, and go to Heaven. Simon Gray had married her when they were both young, both humble, as indeed they always had been, and both poor. She brought to him pure affection, a heart full of tenderness and pity, a disposition as sweet as ever tinged a woman's cheek with smiles, cheerfulness never obscured, simple thoughts reconciled in joy to a simple life, and a faith in religion as perfect as in the light of the outer day. In her quiet and narrow neighbourhood she was thought not without her beauty; and whatever that might have been, it sufficed to delight the heart and soul of Simon Gray, when she became his bride. For twenty years never had they been a whole day apart. No change had ever taken place in their affection, but such change as nature graciously brings when new loves and new duties arise to bless the wedded life. Simon Gray never thought of comparing his wife with others. In herself she was a bliss to him. God gave her to him, and perhaps he thought in his soul that he might be resigned were God to take her away. Such was the spirit that breathed over his constant thoughts, and actions, and discourses; and in him it was unaffected and sincere. But who knows his own soul? God did take her away, and then it was known to him how ungrateful and how miserably weak was his heart, how charged haunted and torn with vain passion and lamentation,

with outcries of grief that have no comfort, with recklessness and despair.

He seemed now to be without any object in this world. His very zeal in the cause he sincerely loved was deadened,—and he often durst not say the things he ought when preaching of the loving kindness of his God. The seat below the pulpit, and close to it, where for so many years he had seen the composed and attentive faces of his beloved wife and children, was now often empty,—or people in it he cared not for,—indeed he cared less and less every Sabbath for the congregation he had long so truly loved, and the bell that formerly sent a calm joy into his heart, ringing through the leafy shelter of the summer trees or tinkling in the clear winter sky, now gave pangs of grief, or its sound was heard with indifference and apathy. He was in many things unconsciously a changed man indeed,—and in some where he perceived and felt the change, with unavailing self-upbraiding and with fear and trembling before his Creator and Redeemer. This sore and sad alteration in their Minister was observed with grief and compassion by all his parishioners. But what could they do for him? They must not obtrude themselves too often on the privacy, the sanctity of sorrow; but he was remembered in their prayers, and many an eye wept, and many a voice faultered, when by the cottage firesides they talked of their poor Minister's afflictions, and the woeful change that had been wrought in so short a time within that Manse, which had so

long stood like the abode of an almost perfect blessedness.

A rueful change was indeed beginning to take place in the state of Simon Gray's soul, of which no one out of the Manse could have had any suspicion, and which for a while was not suspected even by his own attached and faithful servants. Without comfort, under the perpetual power of despondency and depression, hopeless, and not wishing for hope, afraid at last of the uncompanioned silence of his solitary hearth, and with a mind certainly weakened in some degree by that fever of grief, Simon Gray dimly turned his thoughts to some means of alleviating his miseries, be they what they might, and he began to seek sleep during the night from the influence of dangerous drugs. These often gave him nights unhaunted by those beloved spectres whose visits were unsupportable to his soul. They occasioned even thoughts and fancies alien and remote from what he so loved and feared; and now and then touched his disconsolate spirit with something like a gleam of transitory gladness. One moment to be happy, was something that his weakened mind conceived to be a gain. Afraid and terrified with his own thoughts, great relief was it to be placed, even for the shortest time, out of their tormenting power. The sentence of death was then, as it were, remitted,—or, at least, a respite granted, or the hope of a respite. And when his fire was out—the Manse dark and silent, and the phantoms about to return, he flew to this medicine in

an agony, and night after night, till at last it followed regularly the unhappy man's prayers, and Simon Gray, so that his loss might be buried in oblivion, resigned himself into that visionary or insensible sleep.

No doubt his mental sufferings were often thus relieved; but the sum of his misery was increased. Horrid phantasies sometimes assailed him,—his health suffered,—a deep remorse was added to his other agonies,—the shame, the perturbation of despicable vice, and the appalling conviction brought in flashes upon his understanding, that it too was weakened, and that his life might terminate in imbecility or madness.

He had now several separate states of existence, that came by degrees into ghastly union. One was his own natural, widowed, childless, forlorn, uncompanioned, and desolate condition—without one glimpse of comfort, and unendurable altogether to his cold and sickened heart. From that he flew, in desperation, into a world of visions. Then the dead seemed reanimated—the silent burst into song—and sunshine streamed, as of yore, through the low windows of the Manse, and fragrance from the clambering honeysuckle filled every room. The frenzied man forgot his doom, and whenever a door opened, he looked to see his wife and children. The potent drugs then blessed his brain; and his countenance beamed with smiles sad to behold, born of that lamentable delusion. But ere long this spell began to dissolve. Then came horrid hints of the truth. One corpse after another lay

before him—he knew them, and went up to close their eyes—then a sense of his own pitiable prostration of mind came over him, and still unable to know certainly whether he was or was not a childless widower, he would burst out into a long hysterical laugh, strike his burning forehead, and then fling himself down on bed or floor, to him alike, or sit in his lonely room, in utter stupefaction, and with cheeks bathed in tears. The servants would come in, and look upon him in pity, and then go their ways, without uttering a word.

The whole manners and appearance of the Minister of Seatoun were now visibly changed to the most careless eye. His sedate and gentle demeanour was converted into a hurried and distracted wildness. Sometimes he was observed in black melancholy and despair,—and then again in a sort of aimless and unbecoming glee. His dress was not the same,—his countenance had the wrinkles but not the paleness of grief,—his hand trembled, and his voice sounded not like the voice of the same man. A miserable rumour spread over the parish. The austere expressed dissatisfaction,—the gentle pitied,—the thoughtless smiled;—but all confessed that such a change had never been known before as that which had taken place in the Minister of Seatoun,—and that, alas! his life was likely to end in disgrace as well as sorrow. His degradation could not be concealed. Simon Gray the simple, the tem-

perate, the pious, and the just, was now a wine-bibber and a drunkard.

The Manse now stood as if under bann of excommunication. All the gravel walks, once so neat, were overgrown with weeds; the hedges were unpruned; cattle browzed often in the garden; and dust and cobwebs stained and darkened every window. Instead of the respectable farmers of the parish, the elders, or some of the few neighbouring gentry, being seen entering or leaving the Manse, none but men of doubtful reputation, or bad, opened the gate—strangers of mean appearance, and skulking demeanour, haunted it, and lingered about at twilight—and not unfrequently the noise, clamour, and quarrelling of drunken revelry startled the passer by from bounds wherein, at such hours formerly, all had been silent, except, perhaps, the sweet sound of the evening psalm.

It was not possible that all respect could easily or soon be withdrawn from a man once so universally and so deservedly honoured. His vice proceeded from the weakness of his heart, that had lived too much on its own love and on its own happiness, and when these stays were removed fell down into this humiliation. Many excuses,—many palliations,—many denials were framed for him, and there was often silence at his name. After almost all respect was gone, affection remained nearly as strong as before, for that Simon Gray had been a good man none denied, and now too were joined to the affection for him a profound pity and pure com-

passion. " Was he not a widower? Was he not childless? Surely few had been tried as he had been tried, —and it was easy to see that the poor man's grief had affected his brain. The minister is not in his right mind,—but we trust in God that he may get better." Such were the words of many and the wishes of all. For he had no enemies,—and he had for nearly twenty years been a friend to them all, both in things temporal and things eternal.

But the hour of his ruin was fast approaching. Perhaps the miserable man knew that he was lost. Perhaps he took an insane pleasure in looking forward to his utter destruction. He was now the abject slave of his vice—whatever passed within his troubled and often clouded mind, he seemed often to have no shame now—no desire of concealment, but was seen in the open day-light, in presence of old age that mourned, and childhood that could only wonder, a rueful spectacle of degradation, laughing or perhaps weeping, with his senses drowned or inflamed, ignorant of himself and of his profession, and seemingly forgetful even of the name of his parish, and of the house in whose quiet secrecy he had passed so many years of temperance, happiness, and virtue.

A melancholy confusion was now in all his mind. Subjects once familiar to him were now almost forgotten; truths once clear to him as sunshine were now no more known; the great doctrines of Christianity which he had so long taught with simplicity and

fervour, became to his weakened and darkened understanding words without meaning; even the awful events of his Saviour's life, from the hour when he was laid in the manger, till he died on the cross, were at times dimly recognized, for all now was glimmering and ghastly in the world of his memory. One night he was seen sitting beside the graves of his wife and children. The infatuated man fixed on them his glazed and wild eyes, and muttered unintelligible lamentations and blessings. Most sad—most shocking—most terrible, was it to behold such a man in such a place, in such pitiable degradation. For one year had not yet elapsed since Simon Gray had been leading a life of innocent simplicity, a perfect model of what ought to be the simple and austere minister of a simple and austere church. There he was seen by a few, now wringing his hands, now patting the tombstone on his wife's grave, now kneeling down, now kissing it, now lifting up his convulsed face to Heaven, alternately yielding to a wailing tenderness, and a shuddering horror—forgetful now of every thing but the dim confusion of all those deaths and his own miseries, and now seemingly assailed with a dreadful consciousness of his miserable degradation, till, with a horrid groan, long, low, and deep of mortal grief, he rose up from the ground, gazed ghastly round all over the tombstones with a bewildered eye, glared upon the little kirk and its spire now bright with the light of the setting sun, and then, like a wandering and punish-

ed ghost, disappeared into the shady and neglected garden of the Manse.

Enslaved as Simon Gray now was to his vice, or, indeed, disease, yet such was the solemn and awful power over his mind which the Sabbath-day possessed, that he had never once polluted or violated its sanctity. In cases of furious insanity, it has been known that patients whose lives had been religious have felt the influence of strong habitual association, and kept a wild Sabbath even in their cells. With the Minister of Seatoun this mysterious force had hitherto imposed a saving restraint. His congregation was sadly thinned, but still he performed divine service; and no one at least could say that they had ever seen the wretched man under the dominion of the sin, that so easily beset him, in the pulpit. But that hour now came; and he was ruined past all earthly redemption.

Next day the Elders went to the Manse. His servants made no opposition to their entrance, nor did they deny that their Minister was at home. They had not, indeed, seen him since the evening before; but they had heard his footsteps and his voice, and knew that he was not dead. So the Elders walked up stairs to his room, and found him sitting near the window, looking out upon the church-yard, through and below the rich flowery foliage of the horse-chesnuts and sycamores that shadowed both Manse and Kirk. He was fully awakened to the horrors of his situation, and

for a while spoke not a word. "Come down with me into the parlour," he said; and they did so. They all sat down, and there was yet silence. They feared to turn their eyes upon him, as he stood by himself in the midst of them—pallid, ghastly, shuddering,—the big burning tears of guilt, and shame, and despair, falling down upon the floor. "Lost am I in this world and the next! I have disgraced the order to which I belong—I have polluted the church—I have insulted the God who made me, and the Saviour who redeemed me! Oh! never was there a sinner like unto me!" He dashed himself down on the floor—and beseeched that no one would lift him up. "Let me hear your voices, while I hide my face. What have you to say unto your wretched minister? Say it quickly—and then leave me lying on the floor. Lift me not up!"

His body lay there, in this prostration of the spirit, before men who had all known him, loved him, respected him, venerated him, not more than one year ago. Much of that was for ever gone now; but much remained unextinguishable in their hearts. Some of them were austere, and even stern men, of his own age, or older than he; but there are times and occasions when the sternest become the most compassionate. So was it now. They had come not to upbraid or revile,—not even to rebuke. They brought with them sorrow and tribulation, and even anguish in their souls. For they knew that his ministry was at an end; that Simon Gray was now no-

thing unto them but a fallen and frail being, whose miseries, they themselves fallen and frail too were by nature called upon to pity—and they wished, if possible, to give comfort and advice, and to speak with him of his future life. Why should they be stern or cruel to this man? They had sat often and often at his simple board when his wife and family graced and blessed it;—he, too, had often and often familiarly and brotherly sat in all their houses, humble, but scarcely more humble than his own—he had joined some of them in wedlock—baptized their children—remembered them in his public prayers when any of them had been threatened with death—he had prayed, too, by their bedsides in their own houses—he had given them worldly counsel—and assisted them in their worldly trials—and was all this to be forgotten now? And were they to harden their hearts against him? Or, were not all these things to be remembered with a grateful distinctness; and to soften their hearts; and even to bedew their faces with tears; and to fill their whole souls with pity, sorrow, affection, and the sadness of brotherly love towards him who so good in many things, had, at last, been weighed in the balance and found wanting? They all felt alike now, however different their dispositions and characters. They did not long suffer him to lie on the floor—they lifted him up—tried to comfort him—wept along with him,—and when the miserable man implored one of the number to offer a prayer for him, they all solemnly

knelt down, and hoped that God, who was now called upon to forgive his sins, would extend his mercy to all the fellow-sinners who were then together upon their knees.

Simon Gray was no more a Minister of the Church of Scotland, and he left the parish. It was thought by many that he was dead—that shame and remorse, and the disease that clung close to his soul, had killed him at last. But it was not so. The hour was not yet come, and his death was destined to be of a different kind indeed.

The unfortunate man had a brother who, for many years, had lived on a great sheep-farm in Strathglass, a wild district of the northern Highlands. He had always stood high in the esteem and love of this uneducated, but intelligent farmer—he had visited him occasionally with his wife and children for a few days, and had received similar visits in return. This good and worthy man had grieved for Simon's bereavement, and his subsequent frailties; and now he opened the door of his house, and of his heart, to his degraded, and remorseful, and repentant brother. His own wife, his sons, and his daughters, needed not to be told to treat with tenderness, respect, and pity, the most unfortunate man; and on the evening, when he came to their house, they received him with the most affectionate warmth, and seemed, by the cheerfulness of their manners, not even to know of the miserable predicament in which he stood. Happy were all the young people

to see their uncle in the Highlands, although at first they felt sad and almost surprised to observe that he was dressed just like their father, in such clothes as become, on decent occasions, a hard working labouring man, a little raised above the wants of the world.

Even before the heart of poor Simon Gray had time to be touched, or at least greatly revived, by the unrestrained kindness of all those worthy people, the very change of scenery had no inconsiderable effect in shrouding in oblivion much of his past misery. Here, in this solitary glen, far, far away from all who had witnessed his vices and his degradation, he felt relieved from a load of shame that had bowed him to the earth. Many long miles of moor—many great mountains—many wide straths and glens—many immense lakes—and a thousand roaring streams and floods were now between him and the manse of Seatoun—the kirk where he had been so miserably exposed—and the air of his parish, that lay like a load on his eyes when they had dared to lift themselves up to the sunshine. Many enormous belts and girdles of rock separated him from all these; he felt safe in his solitude from the power of excommunication; and there was none to upbraid him with their black silent countenances as he walked by himself along the heathery shores of a Highland loch, or plunged into a dark pine-forest, or lay upon the breast of some enormous mountain, or sat by the roar of some foaming cataract. And when he went into a lonely shealing, or a

smoky hut, all the dwellers there were unknown to him—and, blessed be God, he was unknown to them; —their dress, their gaze, their language, their proffered food and refreshment, were all new—they bore no resemblance to what he had seen and heard in his former life. That former life was like a far off, faint, and indistinct, dream. But the mountain—the forest —the glen—the cataract—the loch—the rocks—the huts—the deer—the eagles—the wild Gaelic dresses—and that wilder speech—all were real,—they constituted the being of his life now; and, as the roar of the wind came down the glens, it swept away the remembrance of his sins and his sorrows.

But a stronger, at least a more permanent power was in his brother's house, and it was that from which his recovery or restoration was ultimately to proceed.

The sudden desolation of his heart that in so brief a period had been robbed of all it held dear, had converted Simon Gray from temperance almost austere, into a most pitiable state of vicious indulgence; and his sudden restoration now to domestic comfort and objects of interest to a good man's human feelings, began to work almost as wonderful a conversion from that wretched habit to his former virtue. New eyes were upon him—new hearts opened towards him—new voices addressed him with kindness—new objects were presented to his mind. The dull, dreary, silent, forsaken, and haunted Manse, where every room swarmed with unendurable thoughts, was exchanged for an

abode entirely free from all recollections and associations, either too affecting, or too afflicting. The simple gladness that reigned in his brother's house stole insensibly into his soul, reviving and renovating it with feelings long unknown. There was no violent or extravagant joy in which he could not partake, and that might form a distressing and galling contrast with his own grief. A homely happiness was in the house, in every room, and about every person, and he felt himself assimilated, without effort of his own, in some measure to the cheerful, blameless, and industrious beings with whom it was now his lot to associate. He had thought himself lost, but he felt that yet might he be saved; he had thought himself excommunicated from the fellowship of the virtuous, but he felt himself treated, not only with affection, but respect by his excellent brother, all his nephews and nieces, and the servants of the house. His soul hoped that its degradation was not utter and irretrievable. Human beings, he began to see, could still love, still respect, even while they pitied him; and this feeling of being not an outcast from his kind, encouraged him humbly to lift his eyes up to God, and less ruefully, and not with such bitter agony, to prostrate himself in prayer.

He thus found himself lifted out of the den of perdition;—and, escaped into the clear unhaunted light, he felt unspeakable horror at the thought of voluntarily flinging himself back again among these dreadful

agonies. His brother rejoiced to behold the change so unexpectedly sudden in all his habits; and, when they went out together in the evenings to walk among the glens, that simple man laid open to Simon all his heart—spoke to him of all his affairs—requested his advice—and behaved towards him with such entire and sincere respect and affection, that the fallen man felt entitled again to hold up his head, and even enjoyed hours of internal peace and satisfaction, which at first he was afraid to suffer, lest they might be the offspring of apathy or delusion. But day after day they more frequently returned and more lastingly remained; and then Simon Gray believed that God was, indeed, accepting his repentance, and that his soul might yet not be utterly lost.

Simon Gray went out with the servants to their work, himself a servant. He worked for his brother and his children, and while his body was bent, and his hands were busy, his heart was at rest. The past could not take direful possession of him when labouring in the fields, or in the garden, or in the barn, or searching for the sheep in snow or tempest, with his brother or his nephews. The pure fresh air blew around his temples—the pure fresh water was his drink—toil brought hunger which the simple meal appeased—and for every meal that his brother blest, did he himself reverently return thanks to God. So was it settled between them; and Simon Gray, on such occasions, in fervid eloquence, expressed his heart

He rose with the light or the lark—all his toils were stated—all his hours of rest; and in a few months he was even like one who, from his boyhood, had been a Shepherd or a tiller of the earth.

In this humble, laborious, and, it may be said, happy life, years past over his head, which was now getting white. Suffice it to say, that once more Simon Gray was as temperate as a hermit. He knew—he remembered—he repented all his former shameful transgressions. But now they were to him only as a troubled dream. Now, too, could he bear to think on all his former life before he was tried and fell—of his beloved Susanna and the children sleeping by her side in Seatoun church-yard—and of that dear, but guilty boy, who died in a foreign land. In his solitary labours in the field, or on his chaff bed, his mind, and his heart, and his soul were often in the happy Manse of former years. He walked in the garden and down the burn-side, through the birchwood, and by the little waterfall, with his wife, and boys and girl—and then could he bear to think of the many many Sabbaths he had officiated in his own kirk, on all the baptisms, and that other greater Sacrament, administered, on beautiful weather, in the open air, and beneath the shadow of that wide-armed sycamore. Calmly, now, and with an untroubled spirit, did he think on all these things; for he was reconciled to his present lot, which, he knew, must never be changed, and to his humbled heart came soothingly and sweet all the

voices of the dead, and all the shadows of the past. He knew now the weakness of his own soul. Remorse and penitence had brought up all its secrets before him; and in resignation and contentment, morning and evening, did he for all his gracious mercies praise God.

Simon had taught his brother's children, and they all loved him as their very father. Some of their faces were like the faces of their dead cousins—and some of them bore the very same voices. So seemed it that his very children were restored to him—the power of the grave was weakened over his heart—and though he sometimes felt, and said himself, that the living, though like the dead, were not his own blessed creatures, yet he gave them up all of a father's heart that was not buried in those graves which had so quickly, one after the other, employed the old sexton's spade. And often, no doubt, when his heart was perfectly calm and happy, did he love his brother's children even as he had loved his own.

Many years thus passed away, and with them almost all tradition, in this part of the country, of Simon's degradation from the clerical order. It had faded in simple hearts occupied with their own feelings; and when he was in company with others at church or market, not even those who knew all the circumstances of his case could be said to remember them—they saw before them only a plain, simple, grave, and contented person like themselves, in a humble walk of life. Si-

mon's own mind had been long subdued to his lot. He felt himself to be what he appeared; and he was distinguishable from his brother, whom in aspect and figure he greatly resembled, only by an air of superior intelligence and cultivation. His hands were, like his brother's, hardened by the implements of labour—his face was as embrowned by the sun—and his dress, on week-day and Sabbath, alike plain, and in all respects that of a respectable tenant. It seemed now that he was likely to terminate his blameless life in peace.

His brother was now obliged to go to the Lowlands on the affairs of his farm, and so many years having elapsed since Simon's degradation, he felt an irresistible desire to revisit, once before he died, the neighbourhood at least of his dear parish once his own, if not the dear parish itself. Many must have now forgotten him ; and indeed ten years, at his period of life, and all his severe miseries, had done the work of twenty—so although but sixty years of age, he seemed at least a man of threescore and ten. Accordingly he accompanied his brother to the Lowlands—once more walked about the streets and squares of the City, where so many changes had taken place that he scarcely knew his way, and where the very population itself seemed entirely changed. He felt comforted that no eye rested upon him; and next day—a fine clear bright frost, and the ground covered with snow—he went with his brother to a village dis-

tant about ten miles only from his own Manse of Seatoun. But a river and two ranges of hills lay between —so there was little danger of his meeting any one who would recognize him to have been the minister of that parish. Simon was happy, but thoughtful, and his nearness to the place of his former life did not, he thought, affect him so powerfully, at least not so overwhelmingly as he had expected. A party of farmers from different districts dined together, and after dinner one of them, whose treatment of Simon, though not absolutely insulting, had been rude and boisterous all day, began to indulge in very brutal talk, and to swallow liquor with an evident design to produce intoxication. Simon endeavoured to avoid all conversation with this person, but on one occasion could not avoid gently remonstrating with him on his grossness. He also kindly dissuaded him from drinking too much, a sin of which, from bitter experience, he had known the miserable effects, and of which he had in many others wrought the cure. But his remonstrance enraged the young farmer, who, it seems, came from the parish of Seatoun, and knew Simon's whole history. He burst out into the most ferocious invectives against his reprover, and soon showed that he was but too intimately acquainted with all the deplorable and degrading circumstances of the case. In the coarsest terms he informed the whole company who they had got amongst them; directed their attention to the solemn hypocrisy of his countenance; assured them that his

incontinence had not been confined to drinking; and that even in the Highlands, the old sinner had corrupted the menials in his brother's house, and was the reproach of all Lowlanders that visited Strathglass.

This sudden, unprovoked, and unexpected brutality annihilated Simon's long gathered fortitude. The shocking, coarse, and unfeeling words were not all false—and they brought upon his troubled and sickening heart not the remembrance of his woeful transgression, but it may be said its very presence. Ten years of penitence, and peace, and virtue, and credit, were at once destroyed,—to him they were as nothing,—and he was once more Simon Gray the sinner, the drunkard, the disgraced, the degraded, the madman. He looked around him, and it seemed as if all eyes were fixed upon him with pity, or contempt, or scorn. He heard malicious whisperings—curious interrogatories—and stifled laughter; and, loud over all, the outrageous and brutal merriment of his insulter, the triumphant peal of self-applauding brutality, and the clenched hand struck upon the table in confirmation of the truth of his charge, and in defiance of all gainsayers. Simon Gray saw—heard no more. He rushed out of the room in an agony of shame and despair, and found himself standing alone in the darkness.

He thanked God that it was a wild, stormy, winter-night. The farmers had not ventured to mount their horses in that snow-drift—but Simon turned his face

to the flaky blast, and drove along knee-deep, turning a deaf ear to his brother's voice which he heard shouting his name. He knew not whither he was thus rushing —for as yet he had no determined purpose in his mind. One wish alone had he at this hour—and that was to fall down and die. But the snow was not so deep a short way out of the village, and the energy which his despair had given his limbs enabled him to pursue his solitary race through the howling darkness of the night. He noticed nothing but the tops of the hedges on each side that marked out the road ;—and without aim or object, but a dim hope of death, or a passion for the concealing and hiding darkness, he thus travelled several miles, till he found himself entering upon a wide common or moor. "I am on the edge of the moor," he exclaimed to himself, "the moor of my own parish—my own Seatoun.—No eye can see me—blessed be God no eye can see me,—but mine eyes can see the shape of the small swelling hills and mounts covered though they be with snow, and neither moon nor stars in heaven. Yes, I will walk on, now that I am here, right on to the kirk of Seatoun, and will fall down upon my knees at the door of God's House, and beseech Him, after all my repentance, to restore to peace my disconsolate, my troubled, and despairing soul."

There had been but little change for ten years in that pastoral parish. The small wooden bridge across the Ewe-bank stood as it did before, and, as his feet made

it shake below him, Simon's heart was filled with a crowd of thoughts. He was now within a few hundred yards of the Manse that had so long been his own, and he stood still, and trembled, and shivered, as the rush of thoughts assailed him from the disturbed world of the past. He moved on. A light was in the parlour window—the same room in which he used to sit with his wife and children. Perhaps he wept by himself in the darkness. But he hurried on—he passed the mouth of the little avenue—the hedges and shrubs seemed but little grown—through a pale glimmer in the sky, while a blast had blown away some clouds from before the yet hidden moon, he saw the spire of his own Kirk. The little gate was shut—but he knew well to open the latch. With a strange wild mixture of joy and despair he reached the door of the Kirk, and falling down prostrate in the pelting snow, he kissed the cold stone beneath his cheek, and, with a breaking heart, ejaculated, "Oh God! am I forgiven—and wilt thou take me, through the intercession of thy Son, at last into thy holy presence?"

It snowed till midnight—and the frost was bitter cold. Next morning was the Sabbath; and the old Sexton, on going to sweep the little path from the church-yard gate to the door of the church, found what was seemingly a corpse, lying there half-covered with the drift. He lifted up the head; and well did he know the face of his former minister. The hair

was like silver that formerly had been a bright brown; but the expression of the dead man's countenance was perfectly serene—and the cold night had not been felt by Simon Gray.

THE RAINBOW.

A SOLITARY Pedestrian was roaming over the glens and mountains in a wild district of the Northern Highlands of Scotland, when a Rainbow began to form itself over part of the magnificent landscape. He was, not without reason, a melancholy and grief-haunted man; and the growing beauty of that Apparition insensibly touched his heart with a delighted happiness to which he had for a considerable time been a stranger. As the varied brightness of the arch which as yet was scarcely united, but showed only several glowing fragments, gradually became more vivid, his whole being felt a sympathetic exhilaration—despondency and sorrow faded away, and he once more exulted in the natural freedom of the prime of life. While he was gazing, the Rainbow became perfect, and bound the earth and heaven together in a span of joy. The glory illuminated two mountains, and the glen between them opening up beneath that effulgence appeared to be a majestic entrance into another and more magnificent world. The sides of these two mountains,

rent with chasms and tumbling torrents, were steeped in the beautiful stains of the arch, so that the rocks seemed clothed with purple, and the waterfalls to roll down in gold. As the Rainbow began to dissolve, the summit of the arch gave way, and the gorgeous colours, forsaking the sky, embodied themselves in a mass of splendour on each side of that wide glen. For a few moments the edge of each mountain was veiled and hidden in that radiance; but it gradually melted away into colourless air, the atmosphere was again open, and a few showery clouds seen hanging opposite the sun, were all that remained to tell of the vanished Rainbow. But all the green fields and all the woods were glittering in freshened beauty—the birds were singing—the cattle lowing on the hills—and the raven and the kite were aloft in heaven. There was a jubilee—and the lonely man who had been sitting on a rock, entranced in that vision, rose up and inwardly said, "Let my way lie up that glen whose glorious portal has vanished—let me walk beneath what was like a triumphal arch but a moment ago, into the solitary magnificence of nature."

The Eremite pursued his way up the wooded banks of a stony torrent, and on reaching the summit of the cliffs saw before him a long expanse of black sullen moor—which he crossed—and a beautiful vale suddenly expanded below his feet, with cultivated fields, woods, and groves, and among many huts sprinkled about like rocks, one Mansion to which they all seemed to apper-

tain, and which, without any grandeur, yet suited in its unpretending and venerable solemnity the character of that lonely and lovely place. He descended into the vale, and happy he knew not why, walked along the widening stream, till he found himself in a lawn, and close by the Mansion which he had discerned from the hill above, but which had till now been concealed by a grove. At this moment, just as he was about to turn back, two Ladies stood close beside him, and with a slight embarrassment the stranger explained to them how unconsciously he had been led to intrude upon their privacy, and after that salutation, was about to retire. But the impression which elegant and cultivated minds make on each other in a moment, when unexpectedly brought together in a situation calculated to show something of their character, now prevented so sudden a parting,—and they who had thus casually met, having entered into conversation, began in a few minutes to feel almost like friends. The stranger, who had been led into this vale by a sort of romantic impulse, could not help feeling as if this meeting were almost an adventure. And it was no doubt an impressive thing to a young Englishman wandering among the Highland mountains, to form an acquaintance in this way with two such persons as those with whom he was now engaged in pleasant conversation. They seemed to be Mother and Daughter;—and when, after about half an hour's walk, the stranger found himself in a spacious and elegant room, the guest of a high-bred and

graceful Lady in a widow's weeds, and, apparently with one beautiful daughter in her retirement, he could scarcely help thinking that the vague imagination which had led him thither under the Rainbow's arch, might have some influence even on the complexion of his future life. He had long been a melancholy man; and minds of that character are often the most apt to give way to sudden emotions of gladness. He closed up all remembrance of one fatal incident in his life under a heap of fresh-springing and happy thoughts and feelings; and animated by the novelty of his situation, as well as by the interesting character of those whose hospitality he was now sharing, never had he felt so free from anxiety and sorrow, and so like his former self, nor so capable of the enjoyment of life and every thing around him that was beautiful and enlivening. As the evening drew on, his heart was sad to think that, as he had come a stranger, so like a stranger must he be departing; but these few hours had sunk into his heart, and he would remember them as long as he lived, and in the remotest parts of the earth.

Does it require long time, days, weeks, months, and years, to enable human beings to love one another? Does the human heart slowly and suspiciously lay up one kind thought after another, till the measure of its affection be full? May gentle words and kindling smiles pass from the lips, and yet the heart remain cold and untouched, and willing to lose sight of, and

to forget, the object of its transitory tenderness? It may be so with many, for the accidents of time teach different lessons, all equally necessary and wholesome perhaps to different hearts; but before human nature has been sorely afflicted, tried, or deceived, its temper is open to kindness and to joy; and attracted by the sympathies of a common nature, why may not those who are strangers to-day, be friends to-morrow? Nor does the deepest affliction always close up the fountains of love in the human soul. The saddest turn often in sudden restoration to the gay and joyful; like light streaming in upon a prisoner through the bars of his dungeon, is the smile on faces not yet bedimmed by grief, to the man of many miseries; and he who hugs his sorrow close to his soul, will often at once lay down that rueful burthen to which he has long clung with infatuated despair, at the sight of youth, beauty, and innocence, rejoicing before him in untamed, fearless, and triumphant bliss. There are often, also, sudden revelations of sympathy made between human beings by a word, a tone, a look, or a smile; truth is then conveyed suddenly and easily into their spirits, and from that moment they rest assured of each other's affection, and each other's worth, as much as if they had been mutually known for years. If there were not these strong and prevailing tendencies in our nature, the paths of human life would be barren, indeed; or the friendships that spring up over them would, in general, be sown by the hand of in-

terest or self-love. But nature follows other processes; and love and friendship, at first sight, often spring up as necessarily as flowers expand from bud into blossom, in the course of a few sunny and dewy hours of one vernal morning.

The young English stranger felt this when the hour of his departure was come, and when the Mother and Daughter accompanied him down the vale, in the dusk of the evening, on his way from Glen-Creran, never more to return. Little was said as they walked along, and they who, a few hours before, had not known of each other's existence, were now about to say farewell with sighs, almost with tears. At length the stranger paused, and said, " Never will I forget this day, this glen, and those from whom I now part. I will remember them all, when my soul is sad, which it ever must be as long as I live. Take the blessing of a wounded heart. Ladies, farewell;" and his eyes, dim with emotion, at that moment met those of that beautiful maiden, turned upon him with a heavenly expression of pity, and at last even stained with irrepressible tears. A black scowl was in the heavens, and darkened the green mount on which they stood; a long dreary sigh of wind came rustling down the vale, and there was a low muttering of distant thunder. " This will be a night of storms," said the Lady, looking kindly towards the stranger. " It is not Highland hospitality to let a guest depart at dark, and in tempest—you must return with us to our house;"

and a huge thunderous cloud, that overshadowed half the vale, was an argument not to be resisted;—so the party returned together; and just as they reached the house, the long loud rattle was heard along the hills, and the river, swollen on a sudden by the deluging rain, roared along the swinging woods, till the whole valley was in a tumult. It was a true Highland night; and the old house rocked like a ship at sea.

But the walls of the Mansion (which had once been a sort of castle) were thick and massy, and the evening past happily along within, while the thunder and the woods, and the torrents, and the blasts, were all raging without in one united and most dismal howl. These Ladies had not past all their lives in a Highland glen, and they conversed with their guest about foreign countries which they had all visited. The harp was touched, and the wild Gaelic airs sounded still more wildly among the fitful pauses of the storm. She who played and sung was no sorceress inhabiting an enchanted castle; but she was a young, graceful, and beautiful girl of nineteen, innocent as beautiful, and therefore a more powerful sorceress than any that ever wound the invisible lines of her spell round a Knight of Romance. At the conclusion of one air, a Chieftain's Lament, the mother heaved a deep sigh; and in the silence that ensued, the artless girl said to the stranger, who was standing beside her, entranced by the wailing strain, "My poor dead brother used to love that air,—I ought not to have

sung it." But that mood passed away; and before retiring to rest, the stranger said gaily, "Your wandering guest's name is Ashton." "We are Stewarts," was the reply; and in an hour the house was buried in sleep.

The stranger alone was wakeful. Not for several years had he been so happy as during this day and evening; and the image of that lovely girl beside her harp, sweetly singing, while the wild night was roaring in the glen, could not leave his thoughts. Even when, towards morning, he fell asleep, she was in his dreams; and then it seemed as if they had long been friends—as if they were betrothed—and had fixed their marriage-day. From these visions he awoke, and heard the sound of the mountain torrent roaring itself to rest, and the trees swinging less fiercely in the weakened blast. He then recollected where he was—his real condition returned upon him—and that sweet maiden was then to him only a phantom once seen, and to smile upon him no more. He rose at sunrise, and, from the window, contemplated the gradual dying away of the storm—the subsiding of the torrent that became visibly less and less every minute—the calm that slowly settled on the woods—the white mists rolling up the mountain's side—till, at last, a beautiful, calm, serene, and sunny day took possession of the sky, and Glen-Creran lay below, in smiling and joyful beauty, a wild paradise, where the world might be forgotten, and human life pass away like a dream.

It was the Sabbath-day, and Glen-Creran that, a few hours ago, had been as loud as the sea, was now not only hushed in the breathing repose of nature, but all rural labour was at rest; and it might almost have been said, that the motionless clouds, the deep blue vault, the fragrant air, and the still earth, were all united together in one sweet spirit of devotion. No shepherd shouted on the mountain—no reapers were in the half-shorn fields,—and the fisherman's net was hung up to dry in the sunshine. When the party met again in the parlour whose wide window opening down to the floor let in the pure fragrance of the roses and honeysuckles, and made the room a portion, as it were, of the rich wooded scenery, there was blended with the warmth and kindliness of the morning salutation, a solemn expression belonging to the hallowed day, and to the religious state of feeling which it inspired. The subdued and almost melancholy air of the Matron was now more touching and impressive, as she was dressed in darker widow's weeds for the house of God; and the sweet countenance of Mary Stuart, which, the night before, had beamed with almost a wild gladness, was now breathed over by a pensive piety, so truly beautiful at all times on a woman's features. The Kirk was some miles distant; but they were prepared to walk to it; and Edward Ashton, without speaking on the subject at all, accompanied them on their way to Divine service.

To an Englishman, who had never before seen a

Highland Sabbath, the scene was most delightful, as the opening of every little glen brought upon him some new interesting groupe, journeying tranquilly towards Appin Kirk. Families were coming down together into the wider strath, from their green nests among the solitude; and friendly greetings were interchanging on all sides, in that wild tongue which, to his ear, seemed so well suited to a land of mountains. The many coloured Highland tartan mixed with the pure white of dresses from the Lowlands; and that mingling of different costumes in the same groupe gave intimation of the friendly intercourse now subsisting constantly between the dwellers of hill and of plain. No haughty equipages came sweeping by. Almost all the assembling congregation were on foot—here and there an old man on a rough mountain poney—there perhaps man and wife on a stronger steed—and there a cart with an invalid, or the weak or aged, with a due accompaniment of children. The distinction of ranks was still visible, but it was softened down by one pervading spirit of humble Christianity. So trooped they along to the House of God—the clear tinkle of the bell was heard—the seats were filled—and the whole vale echoed to the voice of psalms. Divine service was, at this time, performed in the English language, and the Kirk was decently silent in sincere and unostentatious devotion.

During service the Englishman chanced to fix his eyes on a small marble monumental slab in the wall

above the seat, and he read these words—SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF CHARLES STUART, LATE CAPTAIN IN THE FORTY-SECOND REGIMENT, WHO DIED AT VIENNA, 3D AUGUST 17—. A mortal sickness instantly struck his heart, and in that agony, which was indeed almost a swoon of the soul, he wished that he were dead, or buried in solitude many thousand miles away from the place where he now sate. He fixed his eyes upon the countenances—first of the mother—and then of her daughter, and a resemblance, which he had not discovered before, now grew upon him stronger and stronger, to one in his grave, and whom he once would have sacrificed his own life to reanimate. He was sitting in the House of God with the mother and sister of the man whose blood he had shed! The place—the name—the day of the month—left no possibility of doubt. And now many other corroborative circumstances came upon him in that ghastly fit. He remembered the daughter saying after that lament sung to the harp, "I ought not to have sung it;—for my poor dead brother used to delight in that air." The murderer of that poor dead brother had come wandering to a solitary mansion among the mountains, impelled by some evil spirit, and was now sitting below his monument along with her who had given him birth. But every one was intent on the service of God—and his white face, white as a sheet, was observed by none. By degrees he felt the blood circulating again from his stricken heart

—he began to breathe more freely, and had just strength to stand up when the congregation rose to prayer. He saw glimmering and unsteady beside him the meek placid countenances of the widow and her daughter—and turned away his eyes from them, to fix them again on that inscription to which they were drawn by a hideous spell. He heard not the closing benediction—but was relieved in some degree by the fresh air that whispered through the trees, as he found himself walking by the side of his almost unseen companions through the church-yard. "I fear, sir, you are ill," said Mary Stuart, in a sweet and hurried tone of voice—and no other answer was given but a long deep groan, that sounded as if it rose up in pangs from the bottom of a broken heart.

They walked along together in sorrow, fear, and astonishment, at this sudden change in the looks of their new friend, whose eyes, when they ventured to look towards either of them, were wild and ghastly, and every glance accompanied with a deeper and bitterer sigh. "For the love of God—let us, if possible, retire from the crowd—and lead me to some retired place, that I may utter a few words, and then hide myself for ever from your faces."

They walked along a footpath that winded through a coppice wood, and crossing a plank over a rivulet, in a few moments they were in a little glen, as lonely as if it had been far among the mountains. "No houses are in this direction," said the mother some-

what agitated and alarmed, she knew not why—and they sat down together on a seat that had been cut out of the turf by the hands of some shepherd, or schoolboy, in his hours of play. "Mary, bring some water from that pool—Mr Ashton looks as if about to faint. My dear sir, are you better now?"—and the beautiful girl bathed his forehead with the cold limpid water, till he felt the sickness depart, and his soul revive.

He rose up from the seat, and looking stedfastly on their countenances, and then lifting his eyes to Heaven, he sunk down on his knees before them—and said, "My name is now Ashton, but it was not always so—hateful, horrible, and accursed, must that other name be to your ears—the name of Edward Sitwell."

The mother uttered a faint shriek, and her head fell back, while the daughter sat down by her side, and clasped her arms with loud sobs round her neck. The stranger remained upon his knees, with his hands clasped, and his eyes fixed upon them who now beheld him not, for many a wild thought was hurrying through their hearts. At length the widow looked towards him with a dim and changeful expression, and then covering her eyes with both her hands, indistinctly said, "Fatal—fatal name indeed—has God brought before me, on his bended knees, the man beneath whose sword my dear Charles died! Oh! God of mercy, teach me how I should feel in this wild and

most sudden trial." "Pray for me—pray for me to God—and also intercede for me with your mother when I am far away—for believe me when I say, that I have not had many happy days since that fatal event,"—and rising from the ground, the stranger was about to depart. But there was something so irresistibly detaining in the pity that was fast streaming from the eyes of poor Mary Stuart, to whom he had addressed himself, that he stood rivetted to the spot; and he thought, too, that the face of the mother began to look with less horror upon him, and seemed clouded with a humane and Christian compassion. He said nothing in his own vindication—he uttered a few words in praise of the dead—and standing before them, with his pale cheeks, and convulsed sobs, and quivering lips, the sincerity of his sorrow and contrition could not but affect their souls, and bring over their gradually subsiding aversion a deep feeling of sympathy for him who felt so profoundly his own guilt. "Go not away from us, till we have both forgiven you—yes—receive his mother's forgiveness, and may your soul find rest from remorse, as mine has found rest from grief."

Three years had elapsed since the death of her son abroad in that duel, and the soul of this excellent woman had reached the ultimate stage of resignation. When, therefore, she recovered from that cold damp feeling of horror and aversion breathed over her by the presence of one whom, when the tidings of her son's

death first came to her, she had thought of almost as a murderer, she began to reflect on the few words he had uttered, and on the profound passion manifest in all his behaviour. In spite of her natural repugnance, she could not help feeling that he might have fallen in that quarrel instead of her beloved son—that there were no circumstances dishonourable or cruel attending it—and that by his own confession the day before, when ignorant into whose house he had wandered, he had for a long time led a life of melancholy and despondence, arising from the remembrance of that event. His mild and gentle manners—his intelligent and cultivated mind—and the unequivocal symptoms of sensibility and humane emotions which his whole looks, conversation, and deportment had exhibited, pleaded for him not in vain; and when she looked upon him once more in the calmness of exhausted passion, the mother, who through his means had been deprived of an only son, felt that she had wronged him by the violence of her feelings, and that it would be right, generous, forgiving, and pious, to raise him up from that fit of passion, and to look on him as an erring brother, to whom she knew her brave boy had been reconciled on his death-bed, and who had held his hand when he breathed his last. There was something, too, in the sacred influence of the Sabbath-day that at once softened and comforted her heart; he had walked with her and her Daughter to worship God in that little humble kirk, and ought she not now to prac-

tise those lessons of perfect forgiveness of all injuries, be they what they might, enjoined by that religion in which it was her blessing to believe? "Why should I have looked," thought she, "with such abhorrence and creeping of the blood on this young man? My boy is in his grave—I trust in heaven—God has been merciful unto me—and therefore let me now still my beating heart, and administer comfort, since he needs it so much, to one whom not chance, but Providence, has brought to be my guest." Such thoughts. when they had once entered her heart, found a permanent abode there—she was restored to a tranquillity wonderful even to herself—and taking Edward Ashton by the hand, she told him with a faint smile, that he must not so leave them, and plunge alone into the dreary solitude of those black mountains, but accompany them back to the house, and as they had joined together in the public worship of God, so would they that night kneel down together before going to rest, and beseech Him to be merciful to them who were all alike sinners.

During all this time, Mary Stuart had stood pale and breathless as a statue, drinking in every word her mother uttered, marking every tone of her voice, and every change of expression upon her countenance. She had been a mere girl when her brother went abroad, and though she remembered him well, and had loved him with all the tender enthusiasm of childhood, yet her growing thoughts and feelings towards a thousand new objects, calculated by their nature to

interest and delight her heart, had grown over that early affliction; and when she looked at her brother's picture on the wall of her bed-room, or the inscription on the marble slab in the Kirk, it was with a perfectly calm spirit, without vain repining or regret, and with a pleasant revival of old remembrances otherwise half obliterated. When, therefore, she saw her mother once more reconciled to the presence of their guest, and willing that one so mournfully connected with their fate in life, and so strangely brought to them, should not wander off for ever thus forlorn and despairing, her soul rejoiced within her, the former brightness of her visage was restored, and once more the smile was seen that mantles from a heart made happy, without and almost against its will, in the power of its purity and innocence.

As they walked back through Glen-Creran to the Old Mansion, the character of the weather—of the scenery—of the day, seemed to them all to have undergone a change. A more sober music was in the rills; the sky was not so dazzlingly clear; a dim shadow crept over the sweet Loch-Phoil—and, as if a hawk had been in the air, the voice of every bird was silent in the woods. Few words were uttered, but these few became always less and less unhappy; and as the Lady and her Daughter once more welcomed the English guest beneath their gate, it was with a profound feeling, in which aversion, dislike, or repugnance had no share—all these had vanished—although,

when they sat down together in the parlour, there was first an utter silence, and then several sobs and a gush of tears. A few hours ago he was an interesting stranger about to pass away into oblivion—now he was one whom they could never forget—and whom they both felt must be for ever regarded by them, now that the first startling agony was over, with affection for his own sake, with pity for his misfortune, and with sympathy for the contrition which he endured for an act which he, more than themselves or others, regarded as a heinous crime.

The Mother and Daughter retired to their own room early in the evening, and Edward Ashton was left to his own thoughts. He went out into the glen, and walked about the beautiful calm woods till his soul was soothed with the untroubled solitude. He had seen those whom in all the world he had most feared ever to see—and gentle looks and kind words had flowed mutually from each other's hearts. They were both perfectly happy—their grief had passed away—and he began to hope, that, after his long penance, for him too there was to be peace. Across all these thoughts came insensibly the image of sweet Mary Stuart, and he almost ventured to ask himself, "Does she love any one—or has her gentle heart been left to itself in her native solitude?" This was a passing dream—but it passed away only to return; and when he met her again, just as the heavens were beginning to show their stars, he felt towards her an affection so

tender and profound, that he wondered how a day could have produced it; but then he considered what a day that had been, and he wondered no more.

All the domestics now came into the room, some of them old grey-haired people, who had been faithful servants to several generations, and Mary Stuart read to them several chapters from the Bible. It was a calm and happy scene; and as a halo, in old pictures, is drawn round the heads of saints, it might well seem to him who looked on her, and listened to her gentle voice, that a halo now encircled the fair temples of Mary Stuart, as they bent down with their clustering ringlets over the Word of God.

His thoughts, during the wild solitude of the night before, had been many and almost all pleasant, for he had lain in a chamber within an old Tower of the Mansion, like an adventurer of the days of old in the Land of Faëry; but during this night they were all most solemn under the weight of mere humanity, and while his fancy slept, it may be said, that his heart was broad awake. His hand had deprived that mother of her only son—that sweet maiden of her only brother—and might it not be in his power to supply to each her separate loss? His own heart had hitherto conceived no deep affection—but had loved phantoms alone of its own creation. He had led a wandering, restless, and wretched life, for several years, and now when the light of joy seemed to be breaking from a distance like the far-off and faint streak of the doubtful dawn,

his spirit expanded within him, and he dared to look forward to a bright futurity. Had not that fatal quarrel been forced upon him by the impetuous character of his antagonist? Had he not received from him perfect forgiveness, and manly acknowledgment of his courage and his honour? None reproached him for a quarrel that had not been of his own seeking, and he had long used his skill for the defence only of his own life. But two accomplished swordsmen had held each other at the point, and the young Highland chieftain had received his death-wound. This night was as still and breathless as the preceding night had been loud and stormy; and so, in some measure, was it with the heart of Edward Ashton. His thoughts, and feelings, and passions, had worked themselves to rest —a tranquillity, to which he had too long been a stranger, took possession of his mind, and in the morning he cast a rejoicing look over the awakened beauty and magnificence of nature.

The Lady, in whose hospitable house he slept, had thought all night long alternately of him and of her son. The melancholy life he had for some years been leading in his solitary wanderings touched her heart with the profoundest pity, and she wondered if his parents were dead, or if he had a father or a mother who suffered him thus to cherish his unwitnessed and unparticipated grief. Many a one who had been involved in the same fatality easily and soon forgot it, and led the same cheerful or careless life as before,

without blame from others, or remorse of their own consciences; but his whole youth was tinged with sadness, and the solemnity of age was affectingly blended with the natural candour of his prime. How was it possible to refuse affection to such a man? And her last thought, before sinking into the world of dreams, was that her son had expired with a cold hand clasped in his, and with his head on a pillow which his care had smoothed.

As for Mary Stewart, when she "lay down in her loveliness," she tried to banish from her closed eyes the image of the stranger. Yet why should she not think of him? What was he—or could be to her, but one who, when far away, would remember her in sorrow, as the sister of the man whose death lay heavy on his soul? She felt the tears on her cheek, and wiped them away in the silent darkness; once more she prayed that God would send peace to his heart; and when the touch of the morning light awakened her from disturbed sleep, to him her earliest thought unconsciously turned, and he was not forgotten in her orisons.

The rich and cheerful beauty of the early autumn covered all the glen—and it was not easy for the wanderer to leave the heaven that to him lay both within and without the house. Sometimes he ascended by himself to the mountain-tops, and waited till the wreathed mist rose up in the early sun-light, and revealed far below the motionless silence of the wooded glen. He sat alone by the mountain-cataracts, and

traversed the heathery shores of the great wide inland lochs, or the rocky margin of arms of the sea. Valleys that stretched off into the dim and distant day shortened beneath his feet; and he enjoyed the stern silence of the black pine Forest, darkening for leagues the base of some mighty mountain. The belling of the red deer came to him in the desert, as the echo of his footsteps roused up their antlered heads; and he strained his eyes to catch a sight of the eagle whose wild shriek he heard in the blue hollow of the sky. These were his day's wild penance in the uncompanioned solitude of nature. But hours of a sweet and human happiness were now often his; for he walked with fair Mary Stuart alone; or with her mother, through coverts by the streamlet's banks—along green meadow-fields—glades where the young fawn might be seen at play—and into cottages where many a blythe and weather-beaten face welcomed the visits of them whose visits were ever of kindness, charity, or love.

Thus day after day passed along, and still Edward Ashton was in Glen-Creran. He had narrated all the circumstances of her son's death to the mother—and she felt, too truly, that her wild and headstrong Charles had sought his doom! But not the less on that account did her maternal heart weep blessings on her dead son, while it yearned with indescribable emotions of tenderness and pity towards him who did justice to all his virtues, and who was willing to let all blame rest on his own head, rather than that any of it

should alight on him who was in his grave. "O, sir, —if my dear Charles and you had met as friends, well would you have loved one another! Had he been alive now—and you had come here an unconnected stranger, you would have crossed the moors and mountains together after the roe or the red deer. But his life has passed away, even as that shadow that is now passing over into Glenco—See, it is gone!"

They were sitting alone in the woods—no living thing near them but the squirrel leaping from tree to tree,—no sound but that of the cushat mixing with the murmur of the waterfall. Edward Ashton looked stedfastly in her face, and said, "Why am I lingering here?—need I say it? Your daughter Mary I do most tenderly love; if I can gain her affection, could you bear to look on me as your son-in-law? If not, I will leave Glen-Creran to-night." He spoke with great emotion, although suppressed; for to be pitied, and even esteemed was still far different indeed from being received as a son into the bosom of a family whose dearest peace he had been the means of breaking. He waited in terror for the first words of the reply, and they at once raised up his soul into a heaven of joy. "If I saw you married to my Mary, then could I lay down my head and die in peace. I feel as if God had sent you here to be our comforter." His soul was satisfied, and he gave a history of himself and his family—telling how he had changed his name for that of a kinsman, to whose estate he had succeeded.

"England is the country where I ought to live—but if your sweet daughter can be won, every year will we visit Glen-Creran. But, alas! all my hopes are but a dream. She never can be made to love me!" The Lady looked upon him with a pleasant countenance, and an encouraging smile. "My daughter's heart is free—and it is impossible but that she must soon love you." They rose up, and returned in silence to the house.

That evening Edward Ashton and Mary Stuart walked up the wild and lonely Glenure, and before they reached home, there was a clear moon to light them through the fragrant birch-woods. Her heart was given up entirely, with all its calm, pure, and innocent thoughts and feelings, to him who was now her lover; it knew no disguise, nor had it one single emotion to veil or conceal. No passion agitated sweet Mary Stuart, no wild dreams of imagination, no enthusiastic transports of the fancy; but his smile was light, and his voice was music to her soul; and in the serene depth of an affection which had been growing within her heart, even from the very first moment she beheld the stranger in the Pine Grove, would she now have willingly gone with him to the uttermost parts of the earth, or laid down her young and happy life for his sake. When he folded her to his heart, as they mutually pledged their faith, her tears fell down in showers, and the kisses that then touched her eyes and cheek thrilled with unutterable happiness through

her innocent and virgin heart. But dear to her as he then was, she felt, when about to part from him in a few days afterwards, that he was then far dearer; she then thought of being his wife in a vision of delight, for she was now deeply in love; and her soul sickened as the shadow fell on the sun-dial in the garden, that told the hour was come in which he must take his departure, for some months, from Glen-Creran.

Mary Stuart, except the year she had lived abroad with her Mother after her brother's death, had led a solitary life in the Highlands. Her heart had slept in peaceful dreams, and had been as undisturbed as that of a child. But now it was overflowing with a pure passion, and her eyes beheld no longer the shadows and mists of her native mountains, her ears heard no longer the murmurs of her native stream. Edward Ashton was now to her all in all—and her former life, happy as she had thought it, seemed now a vapid and empty dream.

The sun was high in Heaven, and with his full radiance smote the distant clouds that were dissolving into a gentle shower, over the woody termination of the Glen. "What a beautiful Rainbow!" said Mary Stuart, with the tears in her eyes—as her Lover kissed them off, about to say farewell. "A Rainbow brought me here, and as I am going away, lo! again shines in all its beauty the fair Arch of Promise!" These were his last words at parting, and they were remembered by Mary Stuart, and often repeated by

her, as she wandered through the solitary woods, thinking on her betrothed Edward. The hours, though they seemed to linger cruelly, at last had chased one another down the channel of time, like the waters of a changeful rivulet; and the morning of Mary Stuart's Wedding-Day shone over Glen-Creran. A happy day it was all among the mountains of Appin, and also over the beautiful Vale of Lorton in England, where, between their Christmas carols, many a cup went round, among his tenantry, to the young Squire and his Scottish Bride.

THE OMEN.

THERE was a cheerful and even noisy Evening Party in the parlour of Crofthead, the humble residence of a Scottish Laird, who inherited a small estate from a long line of obscure ancestors. The family consisted of himself, wife, and only daughter, and about half a dozen servants belonging to the house, the dairy, and the farm. A good many neighbours had now been gathered together at a tea-drinking; and the table, on this occasion, exhibited various other liquids, in tall green bottles, and creaked on its old legs under the weight of a world of viands. Not a few pretty girls and good-looking young men were judiciously distributed round the board; and from the frequent titterings and occasional hearty bursts of laughter, it could not be doubted that much delicate wit and no little broad humour was sported during the festive hour. The young ladies from the Manse were in excellent spirits, and the comely daughters of Mr M'Fayden, a retired Glasgow manufacturer, lent themselves both to the jammed cookies and the jocularity of the even-

ing with even more than their usual animation. But though she was somewhat more silent than her wont, and had even a slight shade of sadness on her face not quite congenial with the scene of merriment, not one of them all looked so well as the Daughter of the good Old People; and her simply braided auburn hair, with no other ornament than a pink ribband, had an appearance that might well be called elegant, when gently moving among the richly adorned love-locks and ringlets that waved so seducingly round the brows and cheeks of the other more ambitious and unmerciful young ladies. There was not one in the whole parish, high or low, rich or poor, that could for a moment be compared with "sweet Jane Nasmyth;" this was so universally allowed, that she had even no rivals; and indeed had her beauty excited the envy of her companions, her unpretending manners, and the simplicity of her whole character, would have extinguished that feeling, and converted it into willing admiration and affectionate regard. "Sweet Jane Nasmyth" she was always called; and that expression, although at first hearing it may not seem to denote much, was indeed just the one she deserved in her loveliness that courted not the eyes which it won, and in her goodness which flowed on uninterruptedly in its own calm and unconscious course of home-born happiness.

It was now a beautiful moonlight night, and Jane Nasmyth contrived to leave the merry party, whether

unobserved or not is uncertain, and glide away through the budding lilacs into a small Arbour in the garden. It could not be supposed that she went there to sit alone and read the stars; a friend joined her in the bower, and she allowed herself to be taken into his bosom. For two years had she been tenderly and truly beloved by Arthur Crawfurd, a young man of an ancient but decayed family, and now a Lieutenant in the Navy. He was to join his ship next day—and as the frigate to which he belonged had a fighting character, poor Jane, although it was not the first time she had parted from him, was now, more than she had ever been, depressed and disturbed. The din of merriment came from the bright uncurtained windows of the cottage-parlour to the lovers in their Arbour; and the Sailor gaily said, "How could you leave so joyful a party to come and weep here?" In a few minutes Jane Nasmyth dried her tears; for she was not one who gave way needlessly to desponding thoughts; and the manly tenderness and respectful affection of her lover restored her heart almost to its usual serenity, so that they were both again quite cheerful and happy. He had often sailed away, and often returned; he had been spared both in battle and in shipwreck; and while that remembrance comforted her heart, it need not be said that it likewise sent through all its strings a vibration of more thrilling and profounder love.

It was a mild night in Spring, and the leaves yet

upfolded might almost be heard budding in the bower, as the dews descended upon them with genial influence. A slight twittering of the birds in their new built nests was audible, as if the happy creatures were lying awake in the bright breathless night; and here and there a moth, that enjoys the darkened light, went by on its noiseless wings. All was serenity and peace below, and not a stain was round the moon—no dimness over the stars. "We shall have fair weather for a fortnight at least, Jane, for there is no halo yonder;" and as she looked up at these words, her head continued to rest upon her sailor's bosom. To think on waves and storms at such a moment was natural, but to fear them was impossible; her soul was strong in the undisturbed quiet of nature, and all her accustomed feelings of trust in Providence now gathered upon it, and she knew her Sailor would return well and happy to her arms—and that she would then become his Wife.

"I will cut two little branches off this Rose-tree, and plant them side by side on yonder bank that first catches the morning light. Look at them, now and then, when I am away, and let them be even, as ourselves, united where they grow." The cuttings from the Rose-bush were accordingly placed in the ground. Nor did these Lovers think, that in this half playful, half serious mood there was any thing foolish, in persons at their time of life. To be sure they were rather too old for such trifling; for Arthur was twenty-two

years of age, and Jane wanted but a few months of nineteen. But we all become wiser as we get old; and perhaps the time came when these rose-plants were suffered to blossom unheeded, and to cover the ground about them with a snow-shower of fragrance, enjoyed only by the working bees. At present they were put into the mould as carefully as if on their lives had depended the lives of those who planted them; and Jane watered them, unnecessarily, in a vernal night of dew, with a shower of tears. "If they grow —bud—and blossom, that will be a good OMEN—if not, I must not allow myself to have any foolish fears!"

The parting kiss was given, and the last mutual benedictions, and then Arthur Crawfurd, clearing his voice, said, "I hear the fun and frolic is not yet over, nor likely to be so soon. Why don't you ask me to join the party?" It was well known that they were betrothed, and that the marriage was to take place on his return from this cruize, so, with a blush, Jane introduced him into the parlour. "I presume, Lieutenant," said one, "you have come here in a balloon." "Well, Jane," said another, "I declare that I never missed you out of the room—were you giving orders about supper—or have you been in the garden to see if the cresses are fit to be cut?" The Sailor was, during this time, shaking the Old Man by the hand so firmly, that the water stood in his eyes, and he exclaimed, "Why, Arthur, your fist is like a vice. It would not do for you to shake hands with any of the young lasses

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there—you would make the blood tingle in their fingers. Sit down, my dear son, and while the younkers are busy among themselves, let us hear what the French and Spaniards are about, and if it be true that Lord Nelson is going to give them a settling again." So passed the evening by;—charades and songs lent their aid, and after a breaking up of the party, which lasted about half an hour in finding and fitting on straw bonnets, shawls and shoes, the laughter and voices of one and all, as they receded from the cottage up the hill, or down the vale, died away, and Crofthead was buried in silence and in sleep.

Days and weeks passed on, while Jane Nasmyth sat in her cottage, or walked about the adjacent fields, and her lover was sailing far and wide upon the seas. There were many rumours of an expected engagement, and her heart fluttered at the sight of every stranger. But her lover's letters came, if not regularly, yet in pleasant numbers, and their glad and cheerful tone infused confidence into her heart. When he was last away, they were lovers; but now their marriage was fixed, and his letters now were written as to his bride, overflowing with gratitude and delighted affection. When she was reading them, he seemed to be talking before her—the great distance of land and sea between them vanished—and as he spoke of his ship of which he was so proud, she almost expected, on lifting up her eyes, to see its masts towering up before her, with all their glorious flags and ensigns. But

they were streaming to the wind above the foam of the ocean, and her eyes saw only the green shade of the sheltering Sycamore,—her ears heard only the deep murmur of the working bees, as if a whole hive had been in that tent-like Tree.

Nor did Jane Nasmyth forget to visit, many times every day, the two Roses which her lover had planted, and to which he had told her to look as an OMEN of his state when far at sea. To the bank on which they grew she paid her earliest visit along with the beams of the morning sun; and there, too, she marked the first diamonds of the evening dew. They grew to her heart's desire; and now that the year was advanced, they showed a few flower-buds, and seemed about to break out into roses, slender as were their bending stems. That one which bore her lover's name hung over her own, as if sheltering it with its flexile arch, and when weighed down by the rain-drops, or by the breeze, it touched gently the leaves of its companion, and seemed to intertwine with it in a balmy embrace. The heart can accumulate love and delight upon any object whatever; but these plants were in themselves beautiful, and every leaf swarmed, not with poetic visions, but with thoughts of such deep human tenderness, that they were seldom looked at without a gush of tears. They were perfectly unlike all the other shrubs and flowers in that garden; and had they been dug up, it would have been felt as sacrilege; had they withered, the OMEN would have struck through her very life.

But they did not wither; and nothing touched them but the bee or the butterfly, or haply for a moment the green linnet, the chaffinch, or the red-cap, half balanced on the bending spray, and half supported by his fluttering wings.

Crofthead was a cottage in a sheltered vale—but it was not far inland, and by ascending a green hill behind it, Jane Nasmyth could, on clear days, get a glimpse of the blue ocean. The sight even of the element on which her lover now dwelt was delightful to her eyes, and if a white sail shone forth through the sun-light, her heart felt a touch of dear emotion. Sometimes, too, when walking in the vale, she would gaze with love on the beautiful white sea-mew that came floating on the sea-born air into the fields of the quiet earth. As the creature alighted on the green turf, and folding its wings sat there motionless, or walked as if pleased with the soft pressure of the grass beneath its feet, she viewed it as a silent messenger from the sea, that perhaps might have flown round her lover's ship. Its soft plumes bore no marks of the dashing waves; its eyes, although wild, were gentle; its movement was calm as if it had never drifted with the rapid tides, or been driven through the howling tempest; and as it again rose up from the herbage and the wild-flowers, and hovering over her head for a little while, winged its way down the vale over the peaceful woods, she sent her whole soul with it to the

ocean, and heaved a deep sigh unconsciously as it disappeared.

The summer was now over, and the autumn at hand. The hay fields were once more green with springing herbage—and bands of reapers were waiting for a few sunny days, till they might be let loose in joyful labour upon the ripened grain. Was the Amethyst frigate never to finish her cruize? September surely would not pass away without seeing her in harbour, and Arthur Crawfurd at Crofthead. Poor Jane was beginning to pine now for her lover's return; and one afternoon, on visiting, almost unhappy, the Rose trees, she thought that they both were drooping. She forgot that September mornings have often their frost in Scotland; and on seeing a few withered leaves near the now wasted blossoms, she remembered Arthur's words about the OMEN, and turned away from the bank with a shudder of foolish fear. But a trifle will agitate a wiser and older heart than that of Jane Nasmyth, and reason neither awakens nor lulls to sleep the passions of human beings, which obey, in the darkness of their mystery, many unknown and incomprehensible laws. "What if he be dead!" thought she, with a sick pang tugging at her heart—and she hastened out of the garden, as if a beast of prey had been seen by her, or an adder lying couched among the bushes.

She entered the house in a sort of panic, of which she was ashamed as soon as she saw the cheerful and

happy faces of her parents, who were sitting together listening, according to their usual custom, to an old spectacled neighbour busy at a Newspaper, the Edinburgh Evening Courant, a copy of which made visits to about a dozen of the most respectable families in the parish. The old worthy was Emeritus Schoolmaster, and was justly proud of his elocution, which was distinct and precise, each syllable being made to stand well out by itself, while, it was generally admitted, that Mr Peacock had a good deal of the English accent which he had acquired about forty years ago at Inverness. He did not think it worth while to stop very long at the end of a paragraph or article, but went on in a good business-like style, right through politics, stocks, extraordinary accidents, state of the weather, births, deaths, and marriages, a pleasing and instructive medley. Just as Jane had taken her seat, the good old proser had got to ship-news, and he announced, without being in the least aware of what he was about, "FOUNDERED IN THE LATE TREMENDOUS GALE, OFF THE LIZARD, HIS MAJESTY'S FRIGATE AMETHYST. ALL THE CREW PERISHED!

After the first shock of horror, the old people rose from their seats, and tried to lift up their daughter, who had fallen down, as if stone-dead, with great violence on the floor. The Schoolmaster, petrified and rooted to his chair, struck his forehead in agony, and could only ejaculate, "God forgive me—God forgive

me !" After many long drawn sighs, and many alarming relapses into that deadly swoon, Jane opened her eyes; and, looking round, with a ghastly wildness, saw the newspaper lying on the floor where it had dropped from the old man's trembling hands. Crawling with a livid face towards the object of her horror, she clutched it convulsively with her feeble fingers, and with glazed eyes instinctively seizing on the spot, she read, as if to herself, the dreadful words over and over again—and then, as if her intellect was affected, kept repeating a few of them. "Foundered"—"Tremendous gale"—"Every soul perished." "Oh! great and dreadful God—my Arthur is drowned at last!"

Some of the kind domestics now came into the room, and with their care, for her parents were nearly helpless, the poor girl was restored to her senses. She alone wept not—for her heart was hardened, and she felt a band of cold iron drawn tight round her bosom. There was weeping and sobbing, loud and unrestrained with all others, for Arthur Crawfurd, the beautiful and brave, was beloved by every one in the parish, from the child of six years to old people of fourscore. Several young men, too, belonging to the parish, had served on board that ship; and they were not now forgotten, although it was for the young Lieutenant, more than for them of their own rank, that now all the servants wept.

Jane Nasmyth was a maiden of a perfectly pious

mind; but no piety can prevent nature from shrieking aloud at the first blow of a great calamity. She wished herself dead—and that wish she expressed as soon as she found her voice. Her old father knelt down on the floor at one side of his child, and her old mother at another, while the latter had just strength to say: "Our Father which art in Heaven—hallowed be thy name—thy kingdom come—thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The poor girl shut her eyes with a groan; but she could not repeat a single one of these words. Then was the floor, indeed, drenched with tears. They fell down in big drops—in plashing showers from old eyes, that had not seemed before to contain so much moisture. And in that mortal silence no sound was now heard, but one low quivering voice saying, at intervals, "All the crew perished—all the crew perished. Woe is me—woe is me—Arthur is drowned at last!"

They lifted her from the floor—and to her own wonder, she fell not down, but could stand unsupported on her feet. "Take me up stairs to my bed, Mother—let me lie down there—and perhaps I may be better. I said that I wished to die. Oh! these were wicked words. May I live to do my duty to my dear parents in their old age. But, oh! this sickness is mortal—mortal indeed: but let me put my trust in God and my Redeemer, and pray to them—my parents—to forgive my impious words!"

They supported her steps—and she asked to go to

the window just to take one look out into the calm and beautiful afternoon—for not a breath was stirring, and the western sun diffused over the scene a bright but softened repose. "Oh! merciful God—there is Arthur's ghost—I saw it pass by—it waved its hand—bright and smiling were its eyes—take me away—take me away, for I feel that visions beset my brain!" They half lifted her in their arms towards the door—while she continued to say faintly, "It smiled—yes, it smiled—but Arthur's body is mangled, and bruised, and crushed by timber, and stones, and rocks—lying on the sand somewhere, while I was singing or laughing in my miserable delusion—his face gnawed by sea-monsters,"—and then her voice was choked, and she could speak no more.

The door burst open; and there entered, no ghost, but the bold, glad, joyful, living sailor himself, who clasped Jane to his bosom. So sudden was his entrance, that he had not time to observe the dismay and grief that had been trampling on all now beside him—nor did he, during that blest embrace, feel that his betrothed maiden was insensible to his endearments. Joy had taken possession of all his being—all his perceptions; and he saw nothing—felt nothing—but his Jane and her bosom prest closely to his own. "Have I broken in upon a dish of gossip? Well, no rival in the room—so far good.—What, all silent—pale faces—tears—what is the matter? Is this a welcome?" But so many death-like or agitated counte-

nances soon told him that some strong passion pervaded the party—and he began to have his own undefined fears—for he had not yet visited his own father's house. All was soon explained; and Jane having been revived into tolerable composure, the servants retired, but not before shaking hands one and all with the Lieutenant; and the old Schoolmaster, too, who felt himself to blame, although sent for on purpose to read aloud the News, and certainly not answerable for erroneous nautical intelligence, feeling rather uneasy in the room, promised to call next evening, took up his old-fashioned chapeau, and making a bow worthy of a distinguished pedagogue, made the best of his way out and beyond the premises.

Arthur Crawfurd coming in upon them in the transport of his joy, could not easily bring home to his heart a perfect understanding of the scene that had just preceded his arrival. He never perhaps knew the full terror that had nearly deprived his sweet Jane of life; but he knew enough to lay an eternal obligation of tenderness towards her upon his inmost soul. "Instead of foundering, the Amethyst is in as good trim as any frigate in the fleet—but she had to scud for some leagues under bare poles—for the squall came upon us like a sheet of iron. A large ship, name unknown, went down near our stern."—"And all on board perished!" exclaimed Jane in a dewy voice of pity. "They did indeed!" "Oh! many eyes now are weeping, or doomed to weep, for that ship, while mine

are dried. Her name will be known soon enough!" And as she looked on her lover, once more did the maiden give way to the strong imagination of the doom which she felt he had narrowly escaped. "Come, cheer up, Jane—my life is in God's hand—and with him it rests whether I die on my bed in the cottage at last, or, like many a better man, in battle or wreck. But you are willing to marry a Sailor—for better or worse—a longer or shorter date—and no doubt I shall be as happy as any of my mess-mates. Not one of them all has such a sweetheart as thou art—a dutiful daughter makes a loving wife."

After an hour's talk and silence—during which Jane Nasmyth had scarcely recovered from a slight hysteric, her father proposed returning thanks to God for Arthur's return. The sailor was a man of gay and joyous character, but in religion he was not only a firm but impassioned believer. He had not allowed the temptations of a life, which with too many is often wild and dissipated, to shake his faith in Christianity; the many hardships and dangers which he had encountered and escaped had served to deepen all his religious impressions; so that a weak person would have called him methodistical or superstitious. He was neither; but he had heard God in the great deep, and he did not forget the voice in the silence of the green and stedfast earth. So he knelt down to prayer with a humble and grateful spirit, and as he felt his own Jane breathing by his side, on her knees, and knew

that she was at the same time weeping for joy at his return, neither was he ashamed also to weep; for there are times, and this was one of them, when a brave man need not seek to hide his tears either before his fellow creatures or his Creator.

After they had risen from their fervent prayer, and a short silent pause had ensued, "How," said the sailor, "are our two Rose-bushes? Did they hang their heads, do you think, because false rumour sank the good ship Amethyst? Come—Jane—let us go and see." And as some hundreds of swallows were twittering on the house-top in the evening sunshine, collected there with a view either of flying across seas to some distant country, or of plunging down to the bottom of some loch near at hand, (probably the former,) the lovers walked out into the open air—unlatched the little white gate canopied with an arch of honeysuckle, that guarded a garden into which there were no intruders, and arm in arm proceeded to the "Bank of the Two Roses." They had nothing now of that sickly and dying appearance which they had showed to Jane's eyes a few hours ago; no evil OMEN was there now,—but they seemed likely to live for many years, and every season to put forth their flowers in greater number and in richer beauty.

CONSUMPTION.

The Moss-Roses are still clustered in their undecaying splendour above the Porch of Calder-Cottage; the bees are murmuring in their joy around the Hive on its green sward rich with its white and purple clover; the turtle doves are cooing on the roof, with plumage brightening in the sunshine; while over all is shed a dim and tender shadow from the embowering Sycamore, beneath whose shelter was built, many long years ago, the little humble Edifice. In its low simplicity it might be the dwelling of the poor; but the heart feels something in its quiet loveliness that breathes of the spirit of cultivated life. A finer character of beauty pervades the still seclusion, than the hand of labour ever shed over its dwelling in the gratitude of its Sabbath-hours; all around seems ministering to the joy, and not to the necessities of existence; and as the eye dwells on the gorgeous ornaments which sun, and air, and dew have showered in profusion over the blooming walls, the mind cannot but think of some delicate and gentle spirit retired from

the world it had adorned, and enjoying in the twilight of life the sweetness and serenity of Nature.

Such were its inmates a few short months ago. The sound of music was heard far down the romantic banks of the Calder, when, in the silence of evening, the harp was touched within these humble walls, or there arose a mingled voice as of spirits hymning through the woods. But the strings of the harp are now silent, and the young lips that sung those heavenly anthems are covered with the dust.

The Lady who lived there in her widowhood was sprung of gentle blood; and none who had but for a moment looked on her pale countenance, and her figure majestic even under the burden of pain, could ever again forget that image, at once so solemn and so beautiful. Although no deep lines disturbed the meek expression of that fading face, and something that almost seemed a smile still shone over her placid features, yet had that Lady undergone in her day hardships, and troubles, and calamities that might have broken the heart, and laid low the head of manhood in its sternest pride. She had been with her husband in famine, battle, and shipwreck. When his mortal wound came, she sat by his bed-side—her hand closed his eyes and wrought his shroud,—and she was able to gaze with a stedfast eye on all the troops marching with reversed arms, and with slow step, to melancholy music, when the whole army was drawn up at his funeral on the field of battle. Perhaps, then, she wish-

ed to die. But two children were at her knees, and another at her bosom; and on her return to her native country, she found heart to walk through the very scenes where she had been most blest before these infants were born, and to live in the very dwelling to which he who was now buried had brought her a young and happy bride. Such had been his last request—and seventeen years of resignation and peace had now passed over the head of the widow—whose soul was with her husband at morning and at evening prayers—during hours of the day when there were many present—and during hours of the night when there were none but the eye of God to witness her uncomplaining melancholy. Her grief was calm, but it was constant—it repined not, but it wasted away—and though all called her happy, all knew that her life was frail, and that one so sad and sorrowful even in her happiness was not destined by God for old age. Yet for her none felt pity—a higher feeling arose in every heart from the resignation so perfectly expressed in every motion, look, and tone—and beautiful as she was on earth, there came across the souls of all who beheld her a thought of one yet more beautiful in heaven.

Her three Daughters, although their health had always been delicate, were well, cheerful, and happy; but some said, that whenever they were met walking alone, a solemn, if not a mournful expression was on their countenances; and whether it was so or not, they

certainly shunned society rather than sought it, and seldom partook of the innocent amusements natural to youth, and to which youth lends so much grace and attraction. No one ever saw any of them unamiable, or averse from the gladness of others; but a shade of sadness was now perceptible over all their demeanour, and they seemed bound together by some tie even more strict than that of sisterly affection. The truth was, that they felt God had given them but a short life, and that when the bier of one was carried into the church-yard, that of the other would not be long of following it to the place of rest.

Their Mother died first, and her death had been long foreseen by them; for they, who spoke together of their own deaths, were not likely to deceive themselves with respect to that of one so dear to them all. She was ready and willing to die; but tears were on her cheek only a few hours before her decease, for the sake of her three daughters, left to themselves, and to drop away, as she well knew, one after the other, in that fatal disease which they inherited from their father. Her death was peaceful—almost happy—but, resigned as she was, it could not but be afflicting to her parting spirit to see those three beautiful spectres gliding round her bed-side, with countenances and persons that plainly told they were fast hastening on to the tomb.

The funeral of the Mother was conducted as it deserved to be—for humble as she was in heart, yet she had

been highly born; and many attended her body to the grave who had almost forgotten her when alive in her simple retirement. But these were worldly mourners, who laid aside their sorrow with their suits of sable—many who had no right to walk near her coffin felt they had a right to weep over her grave, and for many Sabbaths after her burial, groupes collected beside the mound, and while many of them could not but weep, none left it without a sigh and a blessing. When her three daughters, after the intermission of a few Sabbaths, were again seen walking, arm in arm, into the church, and taking their seats in their own pew, the whole congregation may be said to have regarded the Orphans with a compassion, which was heightened into an emotion at once overcoming and consoling, when it was visible to all who looked upon them, that ere long they would be lying side by side near their Mother's grave.

After her death, the three Orphans were seldomer seen than before; and, pale as their sweet faces had seemed when they used to dress in white, they seemed even paler now contrasted with their black mourning garments. They received the visits of their few dear friends with warmest gratitude, and those of ordinary condolement with a placid content; they did not appear wearied of this world, but resigned to leave it; smiles and the pressure of affectionate hands were still dear to them; and, if they kept themselves apart from society, it was not because they could not sympathize

with its hilarity, its amusements, and its mirth, but because they were warned by feelings close upon their brain and heart, that they were doomed soon to lay their heads down into the dust. Some visitors, on first entering their parlour, in which every thing was still as elegantly and gracefully arranged as ever, wondered why the fair Sisters should so seldom be seen out of their own dwelling; but not one, even the most thoughtless and unfeeling, ever left them without far different thoughts, or without a sorrowful conviction that they were passing, in perfect resignation, the remainder of their life, which, in their own hearts, they knew to be small. So, week after week, visits of idle ceremony were discontinued; and none now came to Calder-Cottage except those who had been dear to their dead Mother, and were dear, even for that reason, had there been no other, to the dying Orphans.

They sat in their beauty within the shadow of death. But happiness was not therefore excluded from Calder-Cottage. It was even a sublime satisfaction to know that God was to call them away from their mortal being unsevered; and that while they all three knelt in prayer, it was not for the sake of one only who was to leave the survivors in tears, but for themselves that they were mutually beseeching God, that he would be pleased to smooth the path by which they were walking hand in hand to the grave. When the sun shone, they still continued to wander along the shaded banks of their beloved Calder, and admire its quiet

junction with the wide-flowing Clyde. They did not neglect their flower-garden, although they well knew that their eyes were not to be gladdened by the blossoms of another Spring. They strewed, as before, crumbs for the small birds that had built their nests among the roses and honeysuckles on the wall of their cottage. They kept the weeds from overgrowing the walks that were soon to be trodden by their feet no more; and they did not turn their eyes away from the shooting flowers which they knew took another spring to bring them to maturity, and would be disclosing their fragrant beauty in the sunshine that shone on their own graves. Nor did their higher cares lose any of the interest or the charm which they had possessed during their years of health and hope. The old people whom their charity supported were received with as kind smiles as ever, when they came to receive their weekly dole. The children whom they clothed and sent to school met with the same sweet voices as before, when on the Saturday evenings they visited the ladies of Calder-Cottage; and the innocent mirth of all about the house, the garden, the fields, or the adjacent huts, seemed to be pleasant to their ears, when stealing unexpectedly upon them from happy persons engrossed with their own joys, and unaware that the sound of their pastimes had reached those whose own earthly enjoyments were so near a close.

These were the last lingering shadows and sounds and odours of life; and the time had not yet come

upon either of these Orphans when they could not be enjoyed. But they had other comforts; and if it had been ever most delightful to them to read and study the word of God, when they let fall upon the holy page eyes bright with the dewy light of health yet undecaying, it was now more than delightful—it was blessed—to peruse it now together, when they had to give the Bible by turns into each other's hands, that their eye-sight might not get dim, nor their voice falter, which would have been, had the same dying Christian read aloud one chapter to the end. When the old Minister visited them, he found them always cheerful and composed—during his stay they were even joyful in their resignation; and at parting, if tears were ever shed, it was by the aged for the young who wept not for themselves, except when they thought how that benign Old Man had stood by their mother's death-bed, and when she had lost her utterance, let her spirit ascend upon his prayers to heaven.

Caroline was the first to die. Her character, unlike that of both her sisters, had been distinguished by great spirit and vivacity, and when they were present, had always diffused something of its own glad light over the serene composure of the one, and the melancholy stillness of the other, without seeming ever to be inconsistent with them; nor did her natural and irrepressible buoyancy altogether forsake her even to the very last. With her the disease assumed its most beautiful show. Her light blue eyes sparkled with astonishing

brilliancy—her cheeks, that had always hitherto been pale, glowed with a rose-like lustre—although she knew that she was dying, and strove to subdue her soul down to her near fate, yet, in spite of herself, the strange fire that glowed in the embers of her life, kindled it often into a kind of airy gladness, so that a stranger would have thought her one on whom opening existence was just revealing the treasures of its joy, and who was eager to unfold her wings, and sail on into the calm and sunny future. Her soul, till within a few days of her death, was gay in the exhilaration of disease; and the very night before she died, she touched the harp with a playful hand, and warbled, as long as her strength would permit, a few bars of a romantic tune. No one was with her when she died, for she had risen earlier than her sisters, and was found by them, when they came down to the parlour, leaning back with a smiling face, on the sofa, with a few lilies in her hand, and never more to have her head lifted up in life.

The youngest had gone first, and she was to be followed by Emma the next in age. Emma, although so like her sister who was now dead, that they had always been thought by strangers to be Twins, had a character altogether different. Her thoughts and feelings ran in a deeper channel; nature had endowed her with extraordinary talents, and whatever she attempted, serious acquisition or light accomplishment, in that she easily excelled. Few, indeed, is the number of

women that are eminently distinguished among their sex, and leave names to be enrolled in the lists of fame. Some accidental circumstances of life or death have favoured those few; and their sentiments, thoughts, feelings, fancies, and opinions, retain a permanent existence. But how many sink into the grave in all their personal beauty, and all their mental charms, and are heard of no more! Of them no bright thoughts are recorded, no touching emotions, no wild imaginations. All their fine and true perceptions, all their instinctive knowledge of the human soul, and all their pure speculation on the mystery of human life, vanish for ever and aye with the parting breath. A fair, amiable, intelligent young maiden has died and is buried. That is all. And her grave lies in its unvisited rest. Such an one was Emma Beatoun. Her mother, her sisters, and a few dear friends, knew what treasures of thought were in her soul—what gleams of genius—and what light of unpretending wisdom. But she carried up her pure and high thoughts with her to heaven; nor did any of them survive her on earth, but a few fragments of hymns set by herself to plaintive music, which no voice but her own, so deep and yet so sweet, so mellow yet so mournful, could ever have fitly sung.

The sufferings of this Sister were heavy indeed, and she at last prayed to be relieved. Constant sickness, interrupted only by fits of racking pain, kept the fair Shadow for the last weeks of her life to bed, and nothing seemed to disturb her so much, as the inces-

sant care of her dying sister, who seemed to forget her own approaching doom in the tenderest ministrations of love. Emma's religious thoughts had long been of an almost dark and awful character, and she was possessed by a deep sense of her own utter unworthiness in the sight of God. It was feared, that as her end drew near, and her mind was weakened by continual suffering, her last hours might be visited with visions too trying and terrible; but the reverse was the case, and it seemed as if God, to reward a life of meekness, humility, and wisdom, removed all fear from her soul, and showed her the loving, rather than the awful mysteries of her Redeemer. On her dead face there sat a smile, just as pleasant and serene as that which had lighted the countenance of Caroline, when she fell asleep for ever with the lilies in her hand. The old Nurse, who had been with them since their infancy, alone observed that she had expired, for there had been no sigh, and the pale emaciated fingers moved not as they lay clasped together across her breast.

Louisa, the eldest, was now left alone, and although her health had always been the most delicate, there seemed, from some of the symptoms, a slight hope that she might yet recover. That fatal hectic flush did not stain her cheeks; and her pulse, although very faint, had not the irregularity of alarming fever. But there are secrets known but to the dying themselves; and all the encouraging kindness of friends was re-

ceived by her as sweet proofs of affection, but never once touched her heart with hope. The disease of which both her sisters had died was in the blood of her father's family, and she never rose up from her bed, or her couch, or the grey osier-seat in the sunny garden, without feeling a deathlike lassitude that could not long endure. Indeed she yearned for the grave; and hers was a weariness that could only find entire relief in the perfect stillness of that narrow house.

Had Louisa not felt death within her bosom, there were circumstances that could not have failed to make her desire life, even after her Mother and Sisters had been taken away. For she had been betrothed, for a year past, to one who would have made her happy. He received an account of the alarming state of the Sisters at Pisa, whither he had gone for the establishment of his own health, and he instantly hurried home to Scotland. Caroline and Emma were in their graves; but he had the mournful satisfaction to be with his own Louisa in her last days. Much did he, at first, press her to go to Italy, as a faint and forlorn hope; but he soon desisted from such vain persuasions. "The thought is sweet to lay our bones within the bosom of our native soil. The verdure and the flowers I loved will brighten around my grave—the same trees whose pleasant murmurs cheered my living ear will hang their cool shadows over my dust, and the eyes that met mine in the light of affection will shed tears over the sod that covers me, keeping

my memory green within their spirits!" He who had been her lover—but was now the friend and brother of her soul, had nothing to say in reply to these natural sentiments. "After all, they are but fancies—Henry—but they cling to the heart from which they sprung—and to be buried in the sweet church-yard of Blantyre is now a thought most pleasant to my soul."

In dry summer weather, a clear rivulet imperceptibly shrinks away from its sandy bed, till on some morning we miss the gleam and the murmur altogether—and find the little channel dry. Just in this way was Louisa wasting—and so was her life pure and beautiful to the last. The day before she died, she requested in a voice that could not be denied, that her Brother would take her into the church-yard, that she might see the graves of her Mother and Sisters all lying together, and the spot whose daisies were soon to be disturbed. She was carried thither in the sunshine, on her sick chair, for the distance was only a very few hundred yards, and her attendants having withdrawn, she surveyed the graves with a beaming countenance, in presence of her weeping Friend. "Methinks," said she, "I hear a hymn—and children singing in the church! No—no—it is only the remembered sound of the psalm I heard the last Sabbath I had strength to go there. Oh! sweet was it now as the reality itself!" He who was to have been her Husband was wholly overcome, and hid his face in despair. "I go—my beloved—to that holy

place where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage—but we shall meet there, purified from every earthly stain. Dry up your tears and weep no more. Kiss--Oh kiss me once before I die!" He stooped down, and she had just strength to put her arms round his neck, when, with a long sigh,—she expired.

THE SHEALING.



An enormous thunder-cloud had lain all day over Ben-Nevis, shrouding its summit in thick darkness, blackening it sides and base, wherever they were beheld from the surrounding country, with masses of deep shadow, and especially flinging down a weight of gloom upon that magnificent Glen that bears the same name with the Mountain, till now the afternoon was like twilight, and the voice of all the streams was distinct in the breathlessness of the vast solitary hollow. The inhabitants of all the straths, vales, glens, and dells, round and about the Monarch of Scottish mountains, had, during each successive hour, been expecting the roar of thunder and the deluge of rain; but the huge conglomeration of lowering clouds would not rend asunder, although it was certain that a calm blue sky could not be restored till all that dreadful assemblage had melted away into torrents, or been driven off by a strong wind from the sea. All the cattle on the hills, and on the hollows, stood still or lay down in their fear,—the wild deer sought in herds the shel-

ter of the pine-covered cliffs—the raven hushed his hoarse croak in some grim cavern, and the eagle left the dreadful silence of the upper heavens. Now and then the shepherds looked from their huts, while the shadow of the thunder-clouds deepened the hues of their plaids and tartans; and at every creaking of the heavy branches of the pines, or wide-armed oaks in the solitude of their inaccessible birth place, the hearts of the lonely dwellers quaked, and they lifted up their eyes to see the first wide flash—the disparting of the masses of darkness—and paused to hear the long loud rattle of heaven's artillery shaking the foundation of the everlasting mountains. But all was yet silent.

The peal came at last, and it seemed as if an earthquake had smote the silence. Not a tree—not a blade of grass moved, but the blow stunned, as it were, the heart of the solid globe. Then was there a low, wild, whispering, wailing voice, as of many spirits all joining together from every point of heaven,—it died away—and then the rushing of rain was heard through the darkness; and, in a few minutes, down came all the mountain torrents in their power, and the sides of all the steeps were suddenly sheeted, far and wide, with waterfalls. The element of water was let loose to run its rejoicing race—and that of fire lent it illumination, whether sweeping in floods along the great open straths, or tumbling in cataracts from cliffs overhanging the eagle's eyrie.

Great rivers were suddenly flooded—and the little

mountain rivulets, a few minutes before only silver threads, and in whose fairy basins the minnow played, were now scarcely fordable to shepherds' feet. It was time for the strongest to take shelter, and none now would have liked to issue from it; for while there was real danger to life and limb in the many raging torrents, and in the lightning's flash, the imagination and the soul themselves were touched with awe in the long resounding glens, and beneath the savage scowl of the angry sky. It was such a storm as becomes an æra among the mountains; and it was felt that before next morning there would be a loss of lives—not only among the beasts that perish, but among human beings overtaken by the wrath of that irresistible tempest.

It was not a time to be abroad; yet all by herself was hastening down Glen-Nevis, from a Shealing far up the River, a little Girl, not more than twelve years of age—in truth, a very child. Grief and fear, not for herself, but for another, bore her along as upon wings, through the storm; she crossed rivulets from which, on any other occasion, she would have turned back trembling; and she did not even hear many of the crashes of thunder that smote the smoking hills. Sometimes at a fiercer flash of lightning she just lifted her hand to her dazzled eyes, and then, unappalled, hurried on through the hot and sulphureous air. Had she been a maiden of that tender age from village or city, her course would soon have been fatally stopt short;

but she had been born among the hills, had first learned to walk among the heather, holding by its blooming branches, and many and many a solitary mile had she tripped, young as she was, over moss and moor, glen and mountain, even like the roe that had its lair in the coppice beside her own beloved Shealing.

She had now reached the gateway of the beautiful hereditary Mansion of the Camerons—and was passing by, when she was observed from the windows, and one of the shepherds who had all come down from the mountain-heights, and were collected together, (not without a quech of the mountain-dew, or water of life,) in a large shed, was sent out to bring the poor Girl instantly into the house. She was brought back almost by force, and then it was seen that she was in tears. Her sweet face was indeed all dripping with rain, but there was other moisture in her fair blue eyes, and when she was asked to tell her story, she could scarcely speak. At last she found voice to say, "That old Lewis Cameron, her grandfather, was dying—that he could scarcely speak when she left him in the Shealing—and that she had been running as fast as she could to Fort William for the Priest." "Come, my good little Flora, with me into the parlour—and one of the shepherds will go for Mr Macdonald—you would be drowned in trying to cross that part of the road where the Nevis swirls over it out of the Salmon Pool—come and I will put some dry clothes on you—you are just about the size of my own Lilias." The

child was ill to persuade—for she thought on the old Man lying by himself in the Shealing at the point of death—but when she saw one of the shepherds whom she knew setting off with rapid steps, her wild heart was appeased, and she endeavoured to dry up her tears. Nothing, however, could induce her to go into the parlour, or put on the young lady's clothes. She stood before the wide blazing peat and wood fire in the kitchen—and her spirits became a little better, when she had told her tale in Gaelic to so many people belonging to her own condition, and who all crowded round her with sympathizing hearts, and fixed faces, to hear every thing about poor old dying Lewis Cameron.

Old Lewis was well known all round the broad base of Ben-Nevis. What his age was nobody precisely knew, but it was ascertained that he could not be under ninety—and many maintained that he had outlived an hundred years. He recollected the famous old Lochiel of the first Rebellion—had fought in the strength and prime of manhood at Culloden—and had charged the French on the Heights of Abraham. He had ever since that battle been a pensioner; and although he had many wounds to show both of bullets and the bayonet, yet his iron frame had miraculously retained its strength, and his limbs much of their activity till the very last. His hair was like snow, but his face was ruddy still—and his large withered hand had still a grasp that could hold down the neck of the

dying red deer to the ground. He had lived for thirty years in a Shealing built by himself among a wild heap of sheltering rocks, and for the last five his little orphan grand-daughter, the only one of his blood alive, had been his companion in his solitude. Old Lewis was the best angler in the Highlands, and he knew all the streams, rivers, and lochs. Many thousand grouse had tumbled on the heath beneath his unerring aim; and the roe was afraid to show her face out of a thicket. But the red deer was his delight—he had been Keeper to Lochiel once—and many a long day, from sunrise to sunset, had he stalked like a shadow over ranges of mountains till he found himself at night far away from his Shealing. He was a guide, too, to botanists, mineralogists, painters, poets, and prosers. Philosophers, men of science, lovers of the muse, hunters of the picturesque, men eager after parallel roads and vitrified forts, and town gentlemen sent from garrets to describe, for the delight and instruction of their fellow citizens, the grand features of nature—all came right to old Lewis Cameron. Many a sweat did he give them, panting in pursuit of knowledge, over the large loose stones, and the pointed crags, and up to the middle in heather beneath the sultry sun, toiling up the perpendicular sides of hill and mountain. But, above all, he loved the young Sassenach, when, with their rifles, they followed with him the red deer over the bent, and were happy if, at

nightfall, one pair of antlers lay motionless on the heather.

Such was old Lewis Cameron, who was now thought to be lying at the point of death. And it was not surprising that the shepherds now collected together during the storm, and indeed every person in the house felt a deep interest in the old man's fate. "Aye, his hour is come—his feet will never touch the living heather again," was the expression in which they all joined. They did not fear to speak openly before little Flora, who was now standing beside the fire, with her long yellow hair let loose, and streaming all wet over her shoulders—for the death of the oldest man in all the glens was an event to be looked for, and the child knew as well as they did that her grandfather's hour was come. Many and many a time did she go to the window to look if the priest was coming up the glen, and at last she began to fear that the rain and the wind, which was now beginning to rise, after the hush of the thundery air, would hinder him from coming at all, and that the old Man would die alone and unconfessed in his Shealing. "Nobody is with him—poor old Man—never, never may I see him alive again—but there is no need for me to wait here—I will run home—the waters cannot be much higher than when I came down the glen." Flora now wept in passion to return to the Shealing—and tying up that long wet yellow hair, was ready to start out into the wild and raging weather.

It happened that the Minister of the parish—young Mr Gordon—was in the house, and one of the shepherds went to call him out from the parlour, that he might persuade Flora to be contented where she was, as certain death would be in her attempt to go up Glen-Nevis. He did all he could to soothe her agitation, but in vain—and as the good priest, Mr Macdonald, did not appear, he began to think that old Lewis should not be left so long on his death-bed. He therefore addressed himself to two of the most active shepherds, and asked if they had any objections to take Flora to the Shealing. They immediately rose up—on with their plaids—and took their staffs into their hands; Flora's face smiled faintly through its tears; and Mr Gordon mildly said, "What is easy to you, shepherds, cannot be difficult to me—I will go with you." The young minister was a Highlander born—had in his boyhood trod the mountains of Badenoch and Lochaber—and there was not a shepherd or huntsman far or near that could leave him behind either on level or height. So they all issued forth into the hurricane, and little Flora was as safe under their care as if she had been sitting in the kirk.

The party kept well up on the sides of the mountain, for the Nevis overflowed many parts of the Glens, and the nameless torrents, that in dry weather exist not, were tumbling down in reddened foam from every scaur. The river was often like a lake; and cliffs covered with tall birches, or a few native pines, stood islanded

here and there, perhaps with a shricking heron waiting on a high bough for the subsiding of the waters. Now a shepherd, and now the minister, took Flora in his arms, as they breasted together the rushing streams—and the child felt, that had she been allowed to go by herself, the Nevis would have soon swept her down into the salt Linnhe Loch. In an hour all the wild part of the journey was over;—their feet were on a vast heathery bosom of a hill, down which only small rills oozed out of gushing springs, and soon lost themselves again—and after a few minutes easy walking, during which Flora led the way, she turned about to the minister, and pointing with her little hand, cried, "Yonder's the Shealing, Sir—my grandfather, if alive, will bless your face at his bed-side."

Mr Gordon knew all the country well, and he had often before been at the head of Glen-Nevis. But he had never beheld it, till now, in all its glory. He stood on a bend of the river, which was seen coming down from the cataract several miles distant among its magnificent cliffs and dark pine forests. That long and final reach of the glen gleamed and thundered before him—a lurid light from the yet agitated heavens fell heavily on the discoloured flood—the mountains of heather that inclosed the glen were black as pitch in the gloom—but here and there a wet cliff shone forth to some passing gleam, as bright as a beacon. The mass of pines was ever and anon seen to stoop and heave below the storm, while the spray of that catar-

act went half-way up the wooded cliffs, and gave a slight tinge of beauty, with its blue and purple mist, to the grim and howling solitude. High above all—and as if standing almost in another world, was seen now the very crest of Ben-Nevis—for although fast-rolling clouds, and mist, and steam, girdled his enormous sides, all vapours had left his summit, and it shot up proudly and calmly into its pure region of settled sky.

But Mr Gordon had not come here to admire the grandeur of nature—it had struck his soul as he looked and listened—but now he was standing at the door of the Shealing. Rocks lay all around it—but it was on a small green plat of its own—and over the door, which could not be entered even by little Flora without stooping, was extended the immense antlers of an old deer, which Lewis had shot twenty years ago in the Forest of Lochiel, the largest ever seen before or since in all the Highlands. Flora came out, with eager eyes and a suppressed voice, "Come in, Sir—come in, Sir—my Father is alive, and is quite, quite sensible."

The young minister entered the Shealing—while the two shepherds lay down on their plaids below some overhanging rocks, where the ground was just as dry as the floor of a room. "Welcome—welcome, Sir—you are not just the one I have been hoping for,—but if he does not arrive till I am gone, I trust that, although we are of different creeds, God will receive my poor

sinful soul out of your hands. You are a good pious minister of his word—Mr Gordon, I am a Catholic, and you a Protestant—but through Him who died for us we surely may alike hope to be saved. That was a sore pang, Sir—say a prayer—say a prayer."

The old Man was stretched, in his Highland garb, (he had never worn another,) on a decent clean bed, that smelt sweet and fresh of the heather. His long silvery locks, of which it was thought he had for many years been not a little proud, and which had so often waved in the mountain winds, were now lying still—the fixed and sunken look of approaching death was on a face, which, now that its animation was calmed, seemed old, old, indeed—but there was something majestic in his massy bulk, stretched out beneath an inexorable power, in that Shealing little larger than a vaulted grave. He lay there like an old chieftain of the elder time—one of Ossian's heroes unfortunate in his later age—and dying ingloriously at last with a little weeping Malvina at his heather couch. The open chimney, if so it might be called, black with smoke, let in a glimmer of the sky—a small torch made of the pine-wood was burning close to the nearly extinguished peat embers, and its light had, no doubt, been useful when the shadow of the thunder-cloud darkened the little window, that consisted of a single pane. But through that single pane the eye could discern a sublime amphitheatre of woodland cliffs, and it

almost seemed as if placed there to command a view of the great Cataract.

Mr Gordon prayed—while little Flora sat down on the foot of the bed, pale, but not weeping, for awe had hushed her soul. Not a word was in his prayer which might not have comforted any dying Christian, of any creed, in any part of the earth. God was taking back the life he had given, and an immortal soul was about to go to judgment. The old man had made small show of religion—but he had never violated its ordinances—and that he was a good Catholic was acknowledged, otherwise he would not have been so well beloved and kindly treated by Mr Macdonald, a man of piety and virtue. Now and then a groan came from his ample chest, and a convulsion shook all his frame —for there was no general decay of nature—some mortal malady had attacked his heart. "Bless you—bless you—my dear young boy," said the ancient white haired image—"this is a hard struggle—a cannon ball is more merciful." Then Flora wept, and went up to his head, and wiped the big drops from his brow, and kissed him. "This is my little Flora's kiss—I am sure; but my eyes are dim, and I see thee not. My bonny roe, thou must trot away down, when I am dead, to the low country—down to some of my friends about the Fort,—this bit Shealing will be a wild den soon—and the raven will sit upon the deer's horns when I am gone. My rifle keeps him on the cliff now—but God forgive me!—what

thoughts are these for a dying man—God forgive me!"

Old Lewis Cameron sat up on his heather-bed; and, looking about, said, "I cannot last long; but it comes in fits; now I have no pain. Was it not kind in that fearless creature to run down the glen in that thunder-storm? I was scarcely sensible when I knew, by the silence of the Shealing, that she was gone. In a little, I sat up, as I am doing now, and I saw her, through that bit window, far down the glen. I knew God would keep down the waters for her sake—she was like a sea-mew in a storm!" Flora went out, and brought in the shepherds. They were awe-struck on seeing the gigantic old man sitting up with his long white hair and ghostlike face—but he stretched out his hand to them—and they received his blessing. "Flora, give the minister and the lads some refreshment—eat and drink at my death—eat and drink at my funeral. Aye—I am a pensioner of the King's—and I will leave enough to make Auld Lewis Cameron's Funeral as cheerful a ane as ever gathered together in a barn, and likewise leave Flora, there, enough to make life blythe when she is a woman." Flora brought out the goat-milk cheese, the barley cakes, and the whisky jar; and, old Lewis himself having blessed the meal, Mr Gordon, the shepherds, and little Flora too, sat down and ate.

Old Lewis looked at them with a smile. "My eye-sight is come back to me.—I see my Flora there as

bonny as ever.—Taste the whisky, Mr Gordon—it is sma' still, and will do harm to no man. Mr Gordon, you may wonder—no, you will not wonder, to hear a dying man speaking thus. But God has given me meat and drink for a hundred years, and that is the last meal I shall ever bless. I look on you all as fellow Christians, now supported by the same God that fed me. Eat—drink—and be merry.—This is the very day of the month on which General Wolfe was killed—a proper day for an old soldier to die. I think I see the General lying on the ground, for I was near him as an orderly serjeant. Several Indian warriors were by, with long black hair and outlandish dresses. I saw Wolfe die—and just before he died, our line gave a shout, that brought the fire into his dim eyes, for the French were flying before our bayonets; and Montcalm himself, though our General did not know that, was killed, and Quebec, next day, was ours. I remember it all like yesterday." The old man's white face kindled, and he lifted up his long sinewy arm as he spoke, but it fell down upon the bed, for its strength was gone. But he had a long interval of ease between the paroxysms, and his soul, kindling over the recollections of his long life, was anxious to hold communion till the very last, with those whose fathers he had remembered children. His was a long look back through the noise and the silence of several generations. "Great changes, they say, are going on all over the world now.

I have seen some myself in my day—but oh my heart is sad, to think on the changes in the Highlands themselves. Glens that could once have sent out a hundred bayonets, belong entirely now to some fat Lowland grazier. Confound such policy, says auld Lewis Cameron." With these words he fell back, and lay exhausted on his heather-bed. "Hamish Fraser, take the pipes, and gang out on the green, and play 'Lochiel's awa' to France.' That tune made many a bluidy hand on that day—the Highlanders were broken—when Donald Fraser, your grandfather, blew up 'Lochiel's awa' to France.'—He was sitting on the ground with a broken leg, and och but the Camerons were red wud with shame and anger, and in a twinkling there was a cry that might have been heard frae them to the top of Ben-Nevis, and five hundred bayonets were brought down to the charge, till the Mounseers cried out for quarter. But we gi'ed them nane—for our souls were up, and we were wet-shod in bluid. I was among the foremost wi' my broad-sword, and cut them down on baith sides o' me like windle-straes. A broad-sword was ance a deadly weapon in these hands, but they are stiff now, and lying by my side just like the stone image o' that man in Elgin church-yard on a Tomb-stane."

Hamish Fraser did as he was desired—and the wild sound of that martial instrument filled the great Glen from stream to sky, and the echoes rolled round and round the mountain-tops, as if the bands of fifty

regiments were playing a prelude to battle. Weel blawn and weel fingered baith," quoth old Lewis, " the chiel plays just like his grandfather."

The music ceased, and Hamish Fraser, on coming back into the Shealing, said, " I see two men on horseback coming up the glen—one is on a white horse." " Aye—blessed be God that is the good priest—now will I die in peace. My last earthly thoughts are gone by—he will show me the Salvation of Christ—the road that leadeth to Eternal Life. My dear son—good Mr Gordon—I felt happy in your prayers and exhortations. But the minister of my own holy religion is at hand—and it is pleasant to die in the faith of one's forefathers. When he comes—you will leave us by ourselves—even my little Flora will go with you into the air for a little. The rain—is it not over and gone? And I hear no wind—only the voice of streams."

The sound of horses' feet was now on the turf before the door of the Shealing—and Mr Macdonald came in with a friend. The dying man looked towards his Priest with a happy countenance, and blessed him in the name of God—of Christ—and of his blessed Mother the undefiled Virgin. He then uttered a few indistinct words addressed to the person who accompanied him—and there was silence in the Shealing.

" I was from home when the messenger came to my house—but he found me at the house of Mr Christie the Clergyman of the English Church at Fort-Wil-

liam, and he would not suffer me to come up the glen alone—so you now see him along with me, Lewis." The dying man said, " This indeed is Christian Charity. Here, in a lonely Shealing, by the death-bed of a poor old man, are standing three Ministers of God—each of a different persuasion—a Catholic—an Episcopal—and a Presbyter.—All of you have been kind to me for several years—and now you are all anxious for the salvation of my soul. God has indeed been merciful to me a sinner."

The Catholic Priest was himself an old man—although thirty years younger than poor Lewis Cameron—and he was the faithful Shepherd of a small flock. He was revered by all who knew him for the apostolical fervour of his faith, the simplicity of his manners, and the blamelessness of his life. A humble man among the humble, and poor in spirit in the huts of the poor. But he had one character in the Highland glens, where he was known only as the teacher and comforter of the souls of his little flock—and another in the wide world, where his name was not undistinguished among those of men gifted with talent and rich in erudition. He had passed his youth in foreign countries—but had returned to the neighbourhood of his birth-place as his life was drawing towards a close, and for several years had resided in that wild region, esteeming his lot, though humble, yet high, if through him a few sinners were made repentant, and resignation brought by his voice to the dying bed.

With this good man had come to the lonely Shealing Mr Christie, the Episcopalian Clergyman, who had received his education in an English University, and brought to the discharge of his duties in this wild region a mind cultivated by classical learning, and rich in the literature and philosophy of Greece and Rome. Towards him, a very young person, the heart of the old Priest had warmed on their very first meeting; and they really loved each other quite like father and son. The character of Mr Gordon, although unlike theirs in almost all respects, was yet not uncongenial. His strong native sense, his generous feelings, his ardent zeal, were all estimated by them as they deserved; and while he willingly bowed to their superior talents and acquirements, he maintained an equality with them both, in that devotion to his sacred duties, and Christian care of the souls of his flock, without which a minister can neither be respectable nor happy. In knowledge of the character, customs, modes of thinking and feeling, and the manners of the people, he was greatly superior to both his friends; and his advice, although always given with diffidence, and never but when asked, was most useful to them in the spiritual guidance of their own flock.

This friendly and truly Christian intercourse having subsisted for several years between these three ministers of religion, the blessed effects of it were visible, and were deeply and widely felt in the hearts of the inhabitants of this district. All causes of jealousy,

dislike, and disunion, seemed to vanish into air, between people of these different persuasions, when they saw the true regard which they whom they most honoured and revered thus cherished for one another; and when the ordinary unthinking prejudices were laid aside, from which springs so much embitterment of the very blood, an appeal was then made, and seldom in vain, to deeper feelings in the heart, and nobler principles in the understanding, which otherwise would have remained inoperative. Thus the dwellers in the glens and on the mountains, without ceasing to love and delight in their own mode of worship, and without losing a single hallowed association that clung to the person of the Minister of God, to the walls of the house in which he was worshipped, to the words in which the creature humbly addressed the Creator, or to the ground in which they were all finally to be laid at rest, yet all lived and died in mutual toleration and peace. Nor could there be a more affecting example of this than what was now seen even in the low and lonely Shealing of poor old Lewis Cameron. His breath had but a few gasps more to make—but his Shealing was blessed by the presence of those men whose religion, different as it was in many outward things, and often made to be so fatally different in essentials too, was now one and the same, as they stood beside that death-bed, with a thousand torrents sounding through the evening air, and overshadowed in their devotion by the gloom of that stupendous Mountain,

All but the grey-haired Priest now left the Shealing, and sat down together in a beautiful circlet of green, inclosed with small rocks most richly ornamented by nature, even in this stormy clime, with many a graceful plant and blooming flower, to which the art of old Lewis and his Flora had added blossoms from the calmer gardens at the Fort. These and the heather perfumed the air—for the rain, though dense and strong, had not shattered a single spray, and every leaf and every bloom lifted itself cheerfully up begemmed with large quivering diamond drops. There sat the silent party—while death was dealing with old Lewis, and the man of God giving comfort to his penitent spirit. They were waiting the event in peace —and even little Flora, elevated by the presence of these holy men, whose office seemed now so especially sacred, and cheered by their fatherly kindness to herself, sat in the middle of the group, and scarcely shed a tear.

In a little while, Mr Macdonald came out from the Shealing, and beckoned on one of them to approach. They did so, one after the other, and thus singly took their last farewell of the ancient man. His agonies and strong convulsions were all over—he was now blind—but he seemed to hear their voices still, and to be quite sensible. Little Flora was the last to go in—and she staid the longest. She came out sobbing, as if her heart would break, for she had kissed his cold lips, from which there was no breath, and his eyelids

that fell not down over the dim orbs. "He is dead—he is dead!" said the child; and she went and sat down, with her face hidden by her hands, on a stone at some distance from the rest, a little birch tree hanging its limber sprays over her head, and as the breeze touched them, letting down its clear dew-drops on her yellow hair. As she sat there, a few goats, for it was now the hour of evening when they came to be milked from the high cliffy pastures, gathered round her; and her pet lamb, which had been frisking unheeded among the heather, after the hush of the storm, went bleating up to the sobbing Shepherdess, and laid its head on her knees.

The evening had sunk down upon the glen, but the tempest was over, and though the torrents had not yet begun to subside, there was now a strong party, and no danger in their all journeying homewards together. One large star arose in heaven—and a wide white glimmer over a breaking mass of clouds told that the moon was struggling through, and in another hour, if the upper current of air flowed on, would be apparent. No persuasion could induce little Flora to leave the Shealing—and Hamish Fraser was left to sit with her all night beside the dead. So the company departed—and as they descended into the great Glen, they heard the wild wail of the Pipe, mixing with the sound of the streams and the moaning of cliffs and caverns. It was Hamish Fraser pouring out a Lament on the green before the Shealing—a mournful but mar-

tial tune which the old soldier had loved, and which, if there were any superstitious thoughts in the soul of him who was playing, might be supposed to soothe the spirit yet lingering in the dark hollow of his native Mountains.

HELEN EYRE.

In a beautiful Town in the south of Scotland, distinguished by the noble river that sweeps by its gardens, its majestic bridge, its old crumbling tower, and a Grandee's princely domains that stretch with their single gigantic trees, and many spacious groves, all around the clustered habitations, resided, for one-half year, an English Officer of Cavalry and a young and lovely woman, who was—not his wife. He was the youngest son of a noble family, and, with some of the vices, possessed many of the virtues of his profession. That he was a man of weak principles, he showed by having attached to him, by the tenderest ties, one who, till she had known him, had been innocent, happy, and respected; that he was not a man of bad principles, he showed by an attention to her as gentle, refined, and constant as ever husband paid to wife. He loved her truly and well. She was his mistress—degraded—despised—looked on with curious and scornful eyes—unspoken to but by his voice, solitary indeed when he was absent, and revived by his pre-

sence into a troubled and miserable delight, that even more than her lonely agonies told her that she was for ever and irretrievably lost. She was his mistress—that was known to the grave who condemned, to the gay who connived, and to the tender-hearted who pitied them both, her and her seducer; but though she knew that such was her odious name, yet when no eyes were upon her but those of Marmaduke Stanley, she forgot or cared not for all that humiliation, and conscious of her own affection, fidelity, and, but for him, innocence too, she sometimes even admitted into her heart a throb of joy and of pride in the endearments and attachment of him whom all admired and so many had loved. To be respectable again was impossible—but to be true to the death unto her seducer, if not her duty, was now her despair—and while she prayed to God for forgiveness, she also prayed that, when she died, her head might be lying on his guilty but affectionate bosom. To fly from him, even if it were to become a beggar on the high-way, or a gleaner in the field, often did her conscience tell her; but though conscience spoke so, how could it act, when envelopped and fettered in a thousand intertwisted folds of affections and passions, one and all of them as strong as the very spirit of life?

Helen Eyre prayed that she might die: and her prayer was granted. He who should have been her husband, had been ordered suddenly away to America.—and Helen was left behind, (not altogether friendless,)

as her health was delicate, and she was about to become a mother. They parted with many tears—as husband and wife would have parted—but dearly as she loved her Marmaduke, she hoped that he might never see her more, and in a few years forget that such a creature had ever been. She blessed him before he went away, [illegible] upon her knees, in a fit of love, grief, fear, remorse, and contrition; and as she beheld him wave his white plumes towards her from a distance, and then [illegible] pear among the trees, she said, "Now I am left alone for repentance, with my God!"

This unfortunate young creature gave birth to a child; and after enjoying the deep delight of its murmuring lips for a few days, during which the desire of life revived within her, she expired with it asleep in her bosom. Small, indeed, was the funeral of the English officer's fair English mistress. But she was decently and quietly laid in her grave; for, despised as she had been when living, she was only pitied now, and no one chose to think but of her youth, her beauty, her pale and melancholy face, her humble mien, and acts of kindness and charity to the poor, whom she treated always as her superiors—for they, though in want, might be innocent, and she had gone far astray. Where, too, thought many, who saw the funeral pass by, where are her relations at this moment? No doubt, so pretty and elegant a being must have had many who once loved and were proud of her—but such thoughts past by with the bier,—she was

buried, and a plain stone laid over her, according to her own desire: "HERE LIES HELEN EYRE, AN ORPHAN, AGED TWENTY-TWO YEARS."

There was one true Christian who had neither been afraid nor ashamed to visit Helen Eyre during the few last weeks of her life, when it seemed almost certain that life was near its close. This was Mrs Montgomery, the widow of a country gentleman of good family, who had for some years resided in the town. This excellent woman knew Marmaduke Stanley, and was not a stranger to the circumstances of this unfortunate and guilty connection. On his departure she had promised to take care that Helen Eyre should be looked after in her illness,—and, when the hand of death lay upon the poor friendless Orphan, she was frequently with her at her bedside, administering comfort and consolation. Such kindness from such a person, at such a time, supported the soul of the dying mother when it was most disconsolate; it quieted all the natural fears of dissolution; and when she, whose own life had been a model of all that was good and beautiful and lofty in the female character, bent down over the penitent sinner and kissed her fair young brow, now cold and clammy in the death-throes, that Christian kiss seemed to assure her that she might be forgiven; and, if God, as we believe, beholds the creatures he has made, it was registered in Heaven.

Mrs Montgomery took the infant into her own house—and had written, to inform its father of what

had happened, when she read in a newspaper that, in a skirmish, Major Marmaduke Stanley had been killed. She then opened a letter he had left with her on his departure—and found that he had bequeathed his small fortune of four thousand pounds to Mrs Montgomery, that she might settle it properly on the mother of his child if she survived, if not, upon the infant.

The infant Orphan was christened Helen Eyre, after its mother, whom, frail as she had been, there was no need that her child, at least, should ever disown. No one wished to have the baby that now belonged to none. And this excellent lady, from no whim, no caprice, no enthusiasm, but touched at the heart with its utter and forlorn helplessness, by sorrow for its poor mother's transgression and early fate, and by something of a maternal affection for its dead father, resolved to adopt Helen Eyre as her own child, and to educate her in a woman's accomplishments, and a Christian's faith. Some smiled—some disdained—and a few even blamed—the kindness that could rescue an orphan from an orphan's fate. Many, too, wondered, they knew not why, when it was known that Major Stanley had left all his fortune to Mrs Montgomery for behoof of the child. But in a few months it was felt by every one, whatever they might choose to acknowledge, that the brave soldier had had a good heart, and that he had committed the interests of his Orphan, even before she was born, to one whose

character was summed up in that one word—a Christian.

It often seems as if those children who have fewest to love them in the world grow up the most worthy of love. Here was an Orphan—born in sin, in shame, and in sorrow—and now left alone on the earth—who grew up beautiful to all eyes, and captivating to all hearts. Before five summers had shone upon her blue eyes, the child was noticeable among all other children. Her mother had been lovely, and there was a time, too, it was said, when her presence had been welcome in the halls even of the noble, who had visited her parents in their pleasant dwelling beside their own Church. Her father, however deficient in more solid worth, had been the ornament of polished life; and it seemed as if nature preserved in this small and beautiful and graceful image the united attractions of both the unfortunate dead. The very loneliness of the sweet child, without a natural home in the world, could not but interest every good heart; but her exceeding beauty made an impression almost like that of love even upon the heartless—and "English Helen"—so she was familiarly called, to distinguish her from another child of the same Christian name at school, was a favourite with all. Besides, she was the adopted daughter of Mrs Montgomery, and that added a charm even to her beauty, her sweetness, and her innocence.

The heart of Helen Eyre expanded, month after

month, in the joy of its innocence, and felt the holy voice of nature whispering to it new feelings of love and affection. The children with whom she played had fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, and many other friends. She had none. She loved the Lady who was so good to her, and by whose bed she slept at night on her own small couch. But she knew that it was not her mother with whom she lived. She had been told that both father and mother were dead; and sometimes the sweet child wept for those she had never seen, and of whom she knew nothing but that they had both been buried long ago. Something sad and melancholy, therefore, mixed itself with youth's native gladness, and a corresponding expression settled itself about her eyes, and often smoothed the dimples on her smiling cheeks. "English Helen's" own heart told her what she had often heard her childish companions say, that she was an orphan; but she knew that though that was something mournful, it could not be wicked, and that, therefore, people would pity her more—not love her less—because her father had been killed in the wars, and her mother had died soon after she was born of a broken heart.

One day Helen Eyre had wandered with some of her companions into the church-yard, near the Old Tower, and, attracted by the murmuring blossoms of a shady horse-chesnut tree, that hung its branches over several tombs and grave-stones, in a corner near the river side, she tripped into the shade, and letting fall

her eyes upon a grey slab, she read there her own name, the inscription on her mother's grave. She went home drowned in tears, and asked her guardian, if that was not the stone under which her mother was buried. The good old Lady went with her to the church-yard, and they sat down together upon that stone. Helen was now ten years old; and perhaps had heard, although she scarcely knew that she had, some dim intimations in the language of her play-fellows, which they themselves had not understood, that she was "a natural child." Mrs Montgomery spoke to her about her parents; and while the sweet child kept her weeping eyes fixed upon her face, as she spoke in a bewildered and perplexing grief, she came to know at last that her mother had been guilty of a great sin, but had been forgiven by God, and had died happy. The child was told, too, although that she could scarcely believe, that some might love herself less for that reason; but that the truly good would love her the more, if she continued to be what she now was, innocent, sweet tempered, and obedient to God's holy laws. "Your mother, Helen, was a kind, gentle, and religious being; and you must always think so, when you weep for her, here beside her grave, or elsewhere. When you are older, I will tell you more about her, and about your birth. But my beloved, my good, and my beautiful child, for I do not fear to call thee so, even to thy sweet face—be not ashamed—hold up your head, Helen, among

your companions, and my hands, as long as I live, will dress for thee that guileless bosom, and tend the flowing of that glossy hair. I am your mother now, Helen, are you not willing to be my child?" The orphan could make no reply, for her little heart was full, almost to breaking—and she could only kiss the hand that took hers gently into it, and bathe it with happy and affectionate tears. They left the church-yard; and before they reached the sweet cottage on the river's side, Helen was gazing with delight on the queen butterflies, as they for a moment expanded their rich, brown, mottled, and scarlet wings on the yellow lustre of the laburnums, and then glanced, careering away over the fruit trees into other gardens, or up into the sunshine of the open day.

In Scotland there prevails, it is believed, a strong feeling of an indefinite kind towards those whose birth has been such as that of poor Helen Eyre. This feeling is different in different minds; but, perhaps, in very few, such as seems reconcileable with a true Christian spirit. Scorn and aversion towards the innocent, however modified, or restrained by better feelings, is not surely, in any circumstances, a temper of mind any where expressly recommended, or indirectly instilled by any passages in the New Testament; and with reverence be it spoken, if we could imagine ourselves listening to the Living Christ, we should not expect to hear from his lips lessons of contumely, or hard-heartedness to poor, simple, innocent, orphan children.

The morality of society is not to be protected by the encouragement of any feelings which Christianity condemns; and as such is the constitution of this world, that the innocent often suffer for the guilty, that is an awful consideration to deter from vice, but surely it is no reason for adding to the misfortunes of virtue. In coarse and vulgar minds this feeling towards illegitimate children is a loathing repugnance, and a bitter and angry scorn. And the name by which they call them is one that comes from their mouths steeped in inhuman pride, as if there were in it an odious contamination. Alas! who are they that thus turn away with loathing from beings formed by God in his own image? Are they all pure—and innocent—and aloof from transgression? Or may not in such cases the scorn of the despicable, the mean, the cruel, the ignorant, and the licentious, fall upon the head of the generous, the just, the pure, the intelligent, the refined and the pious? It is often so. Now, society has its own laws, and they are often stern enough; but let them never, with the good, prevail against the laws of nature; and let every mind that entertains the feeling now alluded to, be cautious, in justice to itself and to a fellow creature, and in due reverence of a common Creator, to separate from it all undeserved virulence, all unchristian contumely—all unbrotherly or unsisterly hatred, and then they will know to how little it amounts, and how easily it must be forgotten in the contemplation of excellence;—and then, too, will they

feel a far deeper compassion for them in whose minds that other rooted passion of contempt so rankly grows. There were many who wondered that Mrs Montgomery could have adopted such an Orphan. And with that coarse wonder they turned away from that noble, high-born, high-bred, and, what was far better, tender-hearted, compassionate, and pious lady, and from the beautiful creature at her side rejoicing in protected innocence and awakened intelligence, beneath the light of her gracious affection.

As Helen Eyre grew out of her sweet girlhood into the ripening beauty of her virgin prime, this feeling regarding her became somewhat stronger. For now there was the jealousy—the envy—and the spite of little minds, painfully conscious of their inferiority, and impatient of total eclipse. They had the tone of the world's most worldly heart on their side; and it was easy, pleasant, safe, and satisfactory, to hang a cloud over her by one single word that could not be gainsayed, when it was felt that in itself the flower was fragrant and most beautiful. Campbell has, in the simple words of genius, spoken of the "magic of a name"—so likewise is there a blight in a name—a blight which may not fall on its object, but which can wither up the best feelings of our nature which the sight of that object was formed to cherish and expand. Helen by degrees instructed her heart in this knowledge, which from nature alone she never could have had—her guardian had told her the story of her

birth—she read in books of persons situated as she was—and although sometimes her heart rebelled at what could not but appear to her most impious injustice, and although even sometimes she felt a sort of angry and obstinate pride which she knew was wrong—yet such was the felicity of her nature, that the knowledge wrought no disturbance in her character; and she was now in her undisputed beauty, her acknowledged accomplishments, and her conscious innocence, humble but happy, sedate but not depressed, not too ready either with her smiles or tears, but prodigal of both when nature knocked at her heart, and asked admission there for grief or for joy.

Helen Eyre was no object of pity; for her bark had been drawn up into a quiet haven, and moored to a green shore overspread with flowers. Yet still she was an Orphan, and the world wore a different aspect to her eyes from that which it presented to other young persons, with troops of friends and relations, bound to them by hereditary connections, or by the ties of blood. They had daily presented to them food for all the affections of the heart; their feelings had not either to sleep or else to be self-stirred, for a thousand pleasant occurrences were constantly touching them with almost unconscious delight. Life to them offered a succession of pleasures ready made to their hands, and they had but to bring hearts capable of enjoyment. Little demand is made on such as those, so long as health continues, and their worldly

affairs are prosperous, to look often, or deeply, or steadily, into their own souls. But with this Orphan the case was very different. She was often left alone to commune with her own heart; and unless thoughts, and feelings, and fancies rose up there, she must have been desolate. Her friends were often not living beings of the same age, and with the same pursuits as herself, for of them she came at last to have but few, but they were still, calm, silent, pure, and holy thoughts that passed in trains before her, when the Orphan was sitting in her solitude, with no one near to cheer her, or to disturb. When she read in the history of real life, or in the fictions of poetry, of characters who acted their parts well, and walked in the light of nature beautiful and blest, or tried and triumphant in the fires of affliction, these she made the friends of her heart, and with these she would hold silent communion all the day long. No eyes seemed averted from her, no faces frowned, nor did any harsh voices rise up among the dead. All the good over whom the grave had closed were felt to be her friends; into that purified world no unkind feelings could intrude; and the Orphan felt no bar to intervene between her beating heart, and those who were the objects of her profound and devout affection. From the slights, or the taunts, or the coldness of living acquaintances, Helen Eyre could always turn to these sacred intimacies and friendships, unbroken and unimpaired; she could bring a tender light from the world of me-

mory to soften down the ruggedness or the asperities of present existence; and thus while she was in one sense an Orphan, almost alone in life, in another she was the child of a family noble, rich, powerful, great, and good.

Of such a happy nature, and trained by the wisdom of her youthful innocence to such habits of emotion and thought, Helen Eyre felt—but not keenly—the gradual falling off and decay of almost all her school-friendships. Some of her companions left that part of the country altogether, and she heard of them no more—some went home in the neighbourhood, and in a short time recognized her when they chanced to meet by a civil smile, question, curtesy, or shake of the hand, and no more—some seemed to forget her altogether, or to be afraid to remember her—and some treated her with a condescending, and patronizing, and ostentatious kindness, which she easily understood to be a mixture of fear, shame, and pride. Such things as these Helen generally felt to be trifles; nor did they permanently affect her peace. But sometimes, when her heart, like that of others, desired a homely, a human, and a lowly happiness, and was willing to unite itself in that happiness with one and all of its youthful friends, whoever they might be, poor Helen could not but feel the cruelty and injustice of such alienation, and perhaps may have wept unseen, to think that she was not allowed to share the affection even of the vulgar, the ignorant, and the mean. Many

who at school, before they had learned the lessons of the world, truly and conscientiously loved her, and were grateful to "English Helen" for the assistance she lent them in their various tasks, and for her sweet and obliging disposition in all things, began now to keep down their natural emotions towards her, and to give way to the common sentiment. Tawdry Misses, destitute of all accomplishments, and ignorant of all knowledge needful or graceful to woman's soul, were ashamed to be thought friends of Helen Eyre, and thought it necessary to explain, that she was only an acquaintance when they were at the Olivers' Boarding-school, adding, that she was to be pitied, for that although, like all persons in her situation, she was excessively proud, yet she was certainly very clever, and did not want heart.

No doubt, it would have been nothing very remarkable, had Helen Eyre, under such circumstances, become what such excellent judges esteemed her to be, irritable, unamiable, and proud. This treatment might have soured her disposition, and armed her against an unjust and cruel world. Some struggles she may have had against such feelings, for she was not without her frailties and imperfections; her cheek may have flushed, and her heart beat with indignation, when insulted by overweening civility, or spiteful scorn. Though she felt pride to be a vice, so was meanness; and Orphan as she was, and illegitimate too, conscious innocence and virtue, good-will to her

fellow-creatures, and piety to her Creator, gave her rights and privileges which were entitled to respect, and which, without blame, she might vindicate, when slighted, insulted, or abused. Therefore, though humble, she was not abased, and a mild pensive dignity overspread all her demeanour which abashed the mean, and won the commendation of all whose souls possessed a single spark of native nobility. Indeed, in her presence it was no easy matter to maintain or put into practice those unchristian principles which, when she was absent, burst forth in all their abject and slavish violence.

Her guardian, protector, and mother, Mrs Montgomery, was a woman who did not pretend to be altogether free from those prejudices, or feelings—which she knew were too often carried to a wicked and sinful degree. But having had Helen put into her arms when an infant, out of the yet warm bosom of her dead mother, she had then felt but as a human being and a Christian towards a helpless child. Affection kept pace with Helen's growth, beauty, virtues, and accomplishments; and not the slightest shade of this feeling now overcast her love. It had long been extinguished by the power of innocence and joy; and the knowledge of the strength of such prejudices in the minds of others had now only the effect of increasing her pride in her dear Orphan, and of adding a holier tenderness to her protecting love. "Shall she be despised whom every morning and every night I

see on her knees before her God—she whom that God has created so good and so beautiful—and who would die for the sake of my old grey hairs!" There was no occasion to conceal one thought from Helen Eyre—she knew her situation now perfectly and wisely—she acknowledged that her parents' sins were a misfortune to her—she was willing to bear the burden of their errors—to suffer what must be suffered—and to enjoy meekly, humbly, and gratefully, what might be enjoyed. Were all the world to despise her—such was her gratitude and affection to her mother, that in that alone she could be satisfied—to live for her—to tend her declining age—and if surviving her, to dedicate the holiest thoughts of her retired life to her memory.

But there was one whom Helen Eyre could call her friend, one as young, as innocent, almost as beautiful as herself, and that was Constance Beaumont. Constance was the daughter of an old, indeed a noble family, and her mother, although justly proud of her rank in society, had not discountenanced her childish friendship with Helen, who lived under the roof of one of her own most respected friends. Still, this was a friendship which she had wished in her heart might insensibly fade away as her daughter advanced in life; for although her nature was above all miserable scorn towards a young creature so worthy of all love, yet she properly wished that the heart of her only daughter should be among her own kin, and that its deepest and

tenderest sympathies should not be drawn away from the bosom of her own family. She had cheerfully allowed Constance to bring Helen to the Hirst during the vacations, and she could not but love the sweet Orphan. She saw that her daughter could never learn anything bad, or mean, or vulgar, from such a companion, but, on the contrary, could not fail to have every virtue expanded, and every accomplishment heightened, by communication with one to whom nature had been so lavish in her endowments. Mrs Beaumont had too much good feeling, and too much good sense, to seek to break off such a friendship in their riper years; but it could scarcely be called blameable if she wished and hoped in her heart, that its passionate warmth might be abated. She had another reason for desiring this, which she scarcely yet owned to her own heart—she had an only Son, whose education in England was now completed, and who, she feared, might love Helen Eyre. The thought of such an alliance was unendurable—and Mrs Beaumont believed, that, dearly as she loved her Son, she would rather see him in his grave, than married to an illegitimate orphan.

That such was the state of this Lady's mind, Helen Eyre had too true a sense of her own condition not to know. Of her thoughts respecting her Son, indeed, she in her thoughtless innocence could suspect nothing, nor had she ever seen him but once when he was a schoolboy. But she knew that Mrs Beaumont was proud —though not offensively so—of her own ancestry and

of her dead husband's; indeed, her stately manners were slightly tinged with pride—and Helen had never left the spacious and rich rooms of the Hirst, and its gallery of old ancestral Portraits, without a feeling, not of depression arising from her own insignificance, but of the wide distance at which she stood in rank from her best-beloved friend and sister, the amiable and graceful Constance. Neither could she help feeling that Constance must feel this too; and every time she met or parted with her, there was now a faint sadness at her heart, and something that seemed to forebode separation.

But Constance Beaumont was too high-born to fear making a friend of one on whose birth there was a stain, even if she had not been too high-minded to suffer such a cause to interrupt their friendship. Strong and secure in her own high rank, and stronger and more secure still in her noble nature, no sooner did she discern the full extent of the general sentiment entertained towards Helen Eyre on the score of her birth, than every warm, pure, disinterested, and passionate emotion of her soul rose up yearning towards her, and she vowed, that as Helen had been the delight and blessing of her childhood and early youth, so should her heart be bound to her all life long, and own her at all times and in all places, with affection, gratitude, and pride. Accordingly, she never was in the town where Helen resided without visiting her—she kept up a constant and affectionate correspondence with her

—she insisted on seeing her frequently at the Hirst—and often, often, with all the eager joyfulness of lovers did these two beautiful and happy young creatures meet, almost by stealth, in the woods and groves, and among the gently sloping hills, to enjoy a solitary hour of impassioned friendship. Constance would not have disobeyed her mother in any positive injunction; of these sisterly assignations she was conscious that her mother would not have approved; but were the best and sweetest of all natural feelings to give way to a faint consideration of a doubtful duty? Could such disobedience be called wrong? And if it were so, might not the fault be repeated over and over again without remorse or self-upbraiding? So Constance felt and so she acted—nor in thus being a dutiful friend, is there any reason to believe that she was an undutiful daughter.

Thus was opening upon her the sweet and dewy prime of the Orphan's life, when an annual Meeting took place of all the first Families in the county, and indeed of people of all ranks and conditions, on a large meadow by the river side, near the town, to witness the skill of the "Ancient Band of Border Bowmen." The sunny day flowed on in joyful and exhilarating pastimes, and in the evening there was a splendid Assembly. Mrs Montgomery was there, and Helen Eyre by her side. All the youth, beauty, and grace of the south of Scotland were present together, and although Helen Eyre was certainly one of the loveliest

of the lovely, it could not be said that she attracted universal attention. There were many circles formed round many attractive centres—none shone exactly like the moon among the lesser stars—but of these stars themselves some were brighter than others, or diffused a mellower lustre. Helen Eyre knew her own situation—neither proud nor ashamed; her dress was simpler than that of many others, but such as it became a lady to wear on such an occasion—a few pearls were round her soft auburn hair—and no eye looked upon her once, sitting half retired in her modest loveliness, without looking again and again—no heart, perhaps, but felt, after ranging over all the splendid galaxy, that there was one who had only to come forward, and seek, in order to gain the prize of grace, elegance, and beauty. The music—the dancing—the stir—the waving of plumes—the sparkling of gems—smiling countenances, and happy voices—all touched the Orphan to the very heart—that heart kindled with the joy of youth, and scarcely ever had Helen Eyre felt so happy and so embued with the bliss of life. All thoughts were banished but those of exhilaration and gladness—she surrendered up her spirit to the gaiety, the mirth, and the glee that were sparkling, and whispering, and moving all around her—and she felt that a Ball was indeed one of the most delightful things in this world.

Mrs Montgomery had her pride, too, in her Or-

phan, as well as any mother in her child; and she took care that Helen Eyre should either have respectable friends—or none. This was the first Public Meeting at which Helen had been present; and when she saw every one dancing around her, her light heart longed to join the groupe. She looked with sparkling and delighted eyes on her sweet Constance, distinguished wherever she moved along; and at length that beautiful Girl came up to her, and whispered in her ear, that her brother, who had arrived from England too late for the archery, desired to be made acquainted with one of whom he had heard so much—Helen Eyre. Helen looked to Mrs Montgomery, and rising up, blushing, but unembarrassed, joined the dance with Henry Beaumont. As they took their place in the good old country-dance, (not very far from the top,) there was much tossing of heads—pursing of mouths—bridling up of elegant and inelegant figures—loud whispering—considerable tittering—and some little downright rudeness. But beauty will have its triumph; and Helen Eyre stood unruffled in that small storm. Henry Beaumont, too, was a young man of birth and great estates—by far the most elegant and accomplished person in the room, and an Officer in the Guards; and it was soon understood by the male part of the scorners, that it might not be quite prudent to express scorn or slight towards any body who stood opposite to him in the dance. There was a haughtiness in his eye some-

what distressing to upstart people, and he carried himself in a way not very describable, but quite intelligible to the meanest and most vulgar capacity. He was likewise upwards of six feet high—and when it was his turn to lead off with Helen Eyre, there was a most polite attention shown to all their movements. It is no great merit, surely, to dance well; but now it seemed as it were—for every eye was turned upon that graceful pair, and even the most senselessly and basely proud felt that it was a pity Helen Eyre had been so born, for that she excelled in every thing she tried, and was, indeed, most truly beautiful. Helen felt, and she enjoyed her triumph. To herself she attributed little of the politeness shown by young Beaumont; but her heart overflowed with gratitude towards Constance; and when she again took her seat beside Mrs Montgomery, scarcely could she refrain from tears, so touched was she by the noble kindness of her friend. The evening past away delightfully—Helen did not dance again—but she was frequently spoken to by young Beaumont, and whether her happiness gave a colour to every thing around her, or it was really so, she thought that all her acquaintances looked less coldly and distantly upon her, and that little or no distinction seemed now to exist between herself and the other young and happy creatures laughing and talking on every side. She even dreamt of this meeting in her sleep; and in that

dream it was not probable that she should see every body except young Henry Beaumont.

Henry Beaumont never concealed his feelings; and next day he declared to his mother, that all Scotland did not hold such another delightful creature as Helen Eyre! The old Lady heard these words with great gravity and solemnity, and said that she hoped her son would remember his birth, and not fall in love with such a person as poor Helen Eyre, however good and beautiful. "Fall in love, mother—who talks of falling in love? I have not fallen in love—not I—but this much is certain, that I must inquire of all my partners how they are this morning;"—and with that he flung out of the room, mounted his horse, and galloping across the country, as if at a steeple chace, he soon found himself walking in a pretty little garden on Tweedside with the good, worthy, old Mrs Montgomery and her fair Helen. He called upon none of his other partners that day at least, and his subsequent asseverations that he had not fallen in love became less and less vehement. The truth is, that he had fallen in love—that he was desperately enamoured—and being a young man of ardent feelings and headstrong will, he swore an oath within his soul, on parting from Helen that forenoon, that, if he could gain her love, he would make her his wife!

Henry Beaumont was not without pride—indeed it was his besetting sin. But his heart was full of tenderness, and the situation of Helen Eyre was such as

to bring all that tenderness up from its deepest spring. He was proud of his ancestry—perhaps of his own accomplishments—of his fine person—and of the power of his manners. He had been distinguished at a great public school, and afterwards at an English University, for the brilliancy of his talents. He no sooner joined the Guards, than he took his place, at once, among the most polished and elegant society in the world. He had met with universal admiration; and all these things together, although he well knew they possessed little intrinsic or permanent value, could not but influence his temper and disposition, before the gradually acquired wisdom of riper years had mellowed the impetuosity of youth, and extended its range of feeling and of thought. He was, therefore, considered by many a haughty and arrogant young man, and not altogether unjustly; but the native generosity of his heart was continually showing itself, and although mere acquaintances or strangers might be repelled by his demeanour, no man could be more esteemed or beloved by his friends. Now a new chord was touched in his heart. The sweet simplicity of Helen Eyre, combined, as it was, with perfect elegance and gracefulness, took his eye at the first glance—and although it could not be said to have gained, yet it certainly at once touched his affections. As the innocence of her heart and the intelligence of her mind indicated themselves unconsciously in every artless, yet well-chosen word, love and admiration of a better

kind stole into his breast; and her exceeding loveliness and beauty gave the warmth of passion to an attachment which was of rapid growth, and after a few interviews, was blended vitally with his very heart's blood. The tone of her voice now thrilled through every fibre of his frame—her image, during absence, haunted him, either sad or smiling alike irresistible and subduing—and seeing no real obstacle in the way of his happiness, he thought in his solitary rambles through the woods and over the hills, (for now he who had hitherto lived constantly in the stir of life, loved to be alone,) that Providence had kindly sent this angelic being to bless him as long as he lived on earth. He thought of her—now in her virgin beauty—now as his bride—now as his wife—now as the mother of his children—and his heart was sick, his very soul was faint in the fever of tumultuous passion, till calmed again by solemn thoughts of eternal union between himself and Helen here and in heaven.

The love which Helen Eyre felt towards him was of a very different kind. It was utterly hopeless, and therefore it was utterly indulged. She knew that she never could be his wife—that he would never stoop to marry her—that Constance even would not like to see her brother forming a connection below his own rank—and that his mother would rather see her poisoned or drowned, at least dead and buried, than the wife of her Henry. All these convictions gave her little or no distress, for they were not brought upon

her unexpectedly, to damp a heart that had been warmed by other thoughts—they formed the habitual knowledge of that humble heart, and they and thoughts like them had been instilled into her bosom, by her good and wise guardian, who knew that to save her from melancholy, it was necessary to show her the truth of life, and to remove all delusions. Helen Eyre, therefore, allowed her soul to rejoice within her, in the agitation of a new and heavenly happiness, whenever Henry Beaumont appeared with his smiling countenance, that brightened up the room, or the field, or the garden, with an effulgence of bliss. She knew her own innocence—her own resignation—and she knew, that if Mrs Montgomery, who was now very old, were to die, most solitary would be her own lot. Therefore, she spoke, smiled, and walked with Henry Beaumont, as with the only being on earth whom, in the sacred silence of her soul, she would, till her dying hour, perfectly love. He could not penetrate into her thoughts—he could not look, with these bold bright beautiful eyes, into the covert of her inner spirit, where they all lay couched night and day for ever—he would place his love on some one of whom he had no cause to be ashamed, and who would be welcomed to the hall of his fathers—he would then only bestow a passing smile, or word, upon the Orphan—but she, the Orphan herself, would cherish him in blameless and indulged passion in her bosom—and call down the blessing of God, morning and evening, and many a time besides, on the heads of himself,

his wife, whoever she might be, and the children that might rise up, like flowers, around their feet. A love so hopeless—so pure—so unselfish—and so unknown, it surely could be no sin for her to cherish, who had no relations of her own, and few friends indeed,—friends doomed, no doubt, to be fewer still, year after year, till at last she might have none to comfort her but her sweet Constance, whom other affections might also keep too often away, and the image of that brother—an image which, engraven on her heart, could only cease to be, when that heart was broken, or had wasted and withered away into the dust.

Helen was walking one evening by the river-side, and had descended into a small green glade on a wooded bank, from which there was a cheerful and splendid prospect of the town and the rich country round, when Henry Beaumont was at her side, and taking her hand into his, pressed it to his heart, and then led her to a stone-seat beside a little spring that bubbled up through the roots of the trees, and danced its short silvery course down into the Tweed. Poor Helen's breath came quickly when he pressed her to his bosom, and with a few burning kisses and breathing words, declared his love and passion, and that she must become his wife. A pang of joy went through her heart, and she could just faintly utter, "Your wife!" "Yes—my wife—say that it will be so—and may God forget me if I am not kind to you—my best and most beautiful Helen—all the days of my life!" "Oh! Sir—you could be un-

kind to no one—but think—oh think—who I am—unfit and unworthy to be the wife of Henry Beaumont!" He had an eloquent tongue—an eloquent eye;—and there was eloquence in the throbbing and beating of the heart that swelled his manly breast. He held Helen in his arms, as if she had been a frightened and palpitating dove—and she wished not to be released from that dear embrace. She, the poor despised and slighted Orphan, heard herself blessed by him who was the pride and flower of Scotland's youth; his gentle, and tender, and respectful kisses stirred up all the holy thoughts that she had hidden in her heart, that they might lie there unseen for ever—and in that trance of bliss, they all overflowed—and a few words of confessed affection escaped her lips. "Yes—I love you beyond life and my own soul—but never, never, Sir, may I be your wife. Think who you are—and then who am I—and a voice will tell you that we never can be united." With these words she broke from his arms, and knelt down, nor was it in his power, so confounded was he, for a few minutes to lift her up. "But though I know you never can marry me, remember—oh! never never cease to remember that I fell down on my knees before you—and vowed before that God who has hitherto preserved me in innocence and peace, to devote my soul henceforth to your love. Enough will it be for me to cherish your image for ever in my heart—to weep with joy when I hear you are happy—never to repine, nor envy her happiness

who may one day lie in your bosom—but since God sent me into the world an orphan unhappily born, let me strive to subdue my soul to an orphan's fate, and submit quietly and piously to the solitary years that may be awaiting me, when my mother's grey hairs are covered with darkness. Now, Sir—now, my beloved Henry Beaumont, let us either part, or walk away in silence, from this spot, which to me will be for ever a hallowed place—for of love and marriage never more must our speech be—they are not for us."

Helen separated from her lover within a mile of her home—and had on her arrival there sufficiently recovered her self-command to be able to appear composed before Mrs Montgomery; but she had never concealed from her dear mother any incident that affected her happiness, and she knew that it was now her duty to make a full disclosure of what had passed. She did so—and had the satisfaction to find that her conduct brought tears of joy into her mother's eyes. The good old Lady assured her that God would reward her for the high-principled sacrifice she had made—and on retiring to her bed-room at night, she blessed her Orphan with more than wonted fervour and solemnity.

No sleep was there this night for Helen Eyre. She had made a great sacrifice—and nature now rose up against it. Why should she not become the wife of Henry Beaumont, if he loved her, as he said, better than all the world? Ought her birth to be a bar be-

tween her and a whole life of bliss? Would she be violating any duty—doing injury or wrong to any living creature—by yielding herself up in wedlock to the man she so tenderly loved, and whom, she knew, she could make happy? Were all the deepest—holiest—most awful affections of the soul to be denied to him and to her, merely because their union might offend a prejudice, or at best a feeling that surely never could be vital, nor set in just opposition to all that the human soul felt to be sanctified in its existence? What if his mother were to be offended—might she not be soothed and reconciled by constant esteem and humble respect, and be brought at last to look without reproachful eyes on the Orphan who made her son happy? But then, this prejudice against her she knew to be with many "a second nature;" and that it could not be rooted out without shaking perhaps many many other feelings, which, although not necessarily connected with it, had been so intertwined with it during the progress of life, that they too might suffer; so that to overcome this sentiment against her, a radical change or revolution never to be hoped for must take place in the mind of Mrs Beaumont. She saw, too, that Mrs Montgomery felt as she felt—and had approved of her conduct, solely because she knew that Henry's high-born and haughty mother would never acknowledge her as his bride. So, Helen rose with the light—and as the bright, cheerful, singing morn advanced, her heart was insensibly re-

stored to its former serenity—and the Orphan was once more happy and contented with her lot.

Then, too, she thought what a heartless sin it would be, even if her marriage with Henry Beaumont could take place, to leave her old mother, who was now so weak and frail. She had been taken, when a baby only a few days old, under the protection of that Saint—and would she fly off on the wings of a selfish and ungrateful love, and forgetting these tottering steps and dim eyes, sink into the bosom of one whom she had known for a few weeks only, and to whom she owed nothing but a few impassioned words and vows? Such thoughts came across her heart. But she was no weak enthusiast even in virtue. And her own pure heart told her, that though it would never have allowed her to leave her mother who was much broken down, and too plainly sinking into the grave, yet that she might, without any violation or forgetfulness of her filial duties, have given Henry Beaumont a pledge to become his wife, when the event she feared and shuddered indeed to name, but which every one knew was near, had taken place. All these were bewildering thoughts—and, when poor Helen went into her mother's room, which she did every morning at a stated hour, her heart was labouring under a heavy load of emotion.

Helen drew the curtains, and was about to kneel down at the bedside, and bless her aged benefactress in prayer. But it seemed that she had not yet awoke;

and, stooping down, the Orphan affectionately whispered a few words into her ear, that she might gently dispel the slumber. But that was a sleep which neither low whisper, nor loud thunder-crash might disturb. Helen knew that her mother was dead! And, for the first time in her life, for her heart was the mistress, and not the slave of its passions, she fainted at the side of the motionless body, with her arms laid softly over its breast.

Before the sun had reached its meridian, the death of Mrs Montgomery was known for many miles round the town where she had led more than twenty years of a benign and charitable life. The melancholy tidings soon reached the Hirst, and Constance Beaumont flew to comfort her dearest friend. Nor did her mother, who yet knew nothing of Henry's avowal of his love to Helen, think of preventing Constance from carrying comfort to the bereaved Orphan. Hers was a proud but a warm heart; and having truly loved Mrs Montgomery, it was in tears that she saw Constance depart to cheer the poor creature who was now sitting by the corpse of her whom she had loved and respected from childhood, and whom she was, ere long, to follow to the grave. That thought of their ages being the same, was at once tender and solemn; and something of the sanctity of that pure unmingled affection with which she regarded the memory of Mrs Montgomery, could not but attach to Helen Eyre, who had so long tended her declining age, and repaid, by the

most beautiful constancy of filial love, the cares which had been lavished in the warmth of nature, and the charity of Christian faith, upon her Orphan head.

Helen knew that Constance would, immediately on hearing of Mrs Montgomery's death, write her a letter of tender condolence; but she was not prepared for such excessive kindness, when that most amiable girl opened her bed-room door with her own hand, and with soft steps and streaming eyes, went up to her and kissed her cheek. The Orphan felt, in that embrace, that she was not yet solitary in the world. There was nothing to break this friendship, although much to crush that other love, and she was glad, even in her sorrow, to know, that through all the changes and chances of this life, she would still hold a place in the heart of Constance Beaumont. The dead stillness of the house was supportable, now that the arm of her sister was round her neck—and they soon went hand in hand together, and gazed on the beautifully serene countenance of her whose spirit was in heaven. Of the two Constance most loudly wept, for her tears fell more for the living than the dead. Who in all the world could be more solitary than the Orphan Helen Eyre? Yet her brow—eyes—cheeks and lips were all calm—there was no agitation—nothing like despair in her quiet motions—and the light of God's mercy shone radiantly upon her as she knelt down to a prayer of thanksgiving in that desolate house. Never before had the full perfection of her character been made ma-

nifest. Now it was tried, and met the sudden and severe demand. Her voice faultered not, nor did her heart quake. She was alone on the earth—but God was in heaven—and with that sublime thought Helen Eyre was now stronger in her utter destitution, than if without it she had been entrenched in the midst of an host of mortal friends. The spirit of her piety kindled that, too, of her beloved Constance—and they sat together in the silent house, or in twilight walked out among the secret trees, perfectly composed and happy, till the day of the Funeral.

That day was indeed one of sore trial—and Helen needed the support of her friend. Often, often—on every day since her death, had she stolen into the room where her Mother lay, and sat by the bedside as motionless as the figure that lay there; but the hour was come when these visits were to end, and the phantom was to be borne off into the chambers of decay. In the silence of her darkened bed-room, with Constance sitting at her couch, the Orphan heard the frequent feet of the company assembling at the funeral. The friends were silent. At last the funeral was heard to be departing from the house. At that moment Helen rose, and looking through an opening of the darkened window, she saw the bier in motion—slowly borne away up the avenue, below the shadow of the trees. A tall figure was at the right side of the coffin—one of the mourners. It was Henry Beaumont—his head was bowed down, and his face sedate in a

manly sorrow. " See how my brother weeps !" said Constance—and Helen did not fear then to call down the blessing of God upon his head, and then turning to Constance, she said, " Happy, happy art thou to have such a brother !" And as they were kissing each other, the Funeral disappeared.

Two days after the funeral Mrs Beaumont came for her daughter. She behaved with the greatest tenderness and sympathy to Helen Eyre, and had not sat long in company with the Orphan till her soul was even awed by the sanctity of her resignation. The flowers that the old Lady had so carefully tended did not miss her hands ; the room bore no marks of the distraction or forgetfulness of passionate grief ; Helen's dress was simple and graceful as ever ; and except that her face was somewhat wan, and her voice occasionally tremulous, there were no other outward symptoms of sorrow. If the Orphan had thought of the future, it was plain that she felt that vista to terminate in the mystery of a darkness spread out in mercy from the hollow of God's awful hand, and that she was not about to terrify herself with phantoms of her own creation. If sorrow, sickness, or desertion by friends, were to be her lot, she would lay her hands upon the Bible, and endure the decree. But from the mildness of her expressive countenance, it seemed that her heart was confined chiefly to dreams of the happy past. She had no sins—and not many frailties with which to reproach herself—for these her contrition needed not

to be bitter—no harsh or hasty words—ro unamiable or unf[illegible] looks had ever past from her towards her benefact[illegible] the humblest are permitted to enjoy the delig[illegible]scious piety, and of a sincere wish to do well, so was Helen Eyre now happy in the remembrance of all her affection to her mother, and of every little daily and hourly act performed, not from duty, but in love.

Mrs Montgomery had bequeathed to the Orphan the pleasant dwelling in which she had past all her days; and Helen desired no other place of retirement, till she should be called to the last final and profound repose. The sacred influence of death had quite suppressed—not extinguished her pure passion for Henry Beaumont; and, without agitation, she sat now in the presence of his stately mother, nor feared ever to deserve her frowns. She had seen Henry walking a weeping mourner by the side of that coffin—and the remembrance was now sad and delightful to her soul, nor, if he could be happy without her, did she wish ever to behold him more. A lonely life needed not to be a melancholy one—she had stores for thought laid up in her heart, young as it was, and powers of thought, too, confirmed by nature, and strengthened by contented innocence. And she feared not, when the years of her youth had glided away in the seclusion of those peaceful shades, that age would bring its own happiness and its own wisdom, nor was there any reason to fear even the coming on of feeble footsteps and of grey

hairs. Henry Beaumont's impassioned vows never could be realized—but that place where she had heard them might be visited often and often—and hers, she knew, was not a weak and repining heart, that would die of hopeless and unfortunate love.

While they were sitting together calmly and kindly, and the time was just at hand when Constance was about to give her friend a farewell kiss, she saw her brother coming down the avenue, and could not but feel agitated at his approach. For although Helen had said nothing to her of the avowal of his sentiments, he had himself told his sister of all that had happened, and sworn her for the present to secrecy. He entered the room—not with the same fervent air and expression, as when they last met, but with a tenderness that was far more irresistible to poor Helen's soul. A visit to an Orphan who had just buried her best—not her only friend—was not to be a visit of avowed love, but of sympathy and condolence; and Henry looked upon her with such profound pity, and such consoling gentleness of eye and voice, that his mother saw and felt that Helen Eyre was dearer to him than life. That sudden conviction gave her a pang, and her countenance fell and was darkened. It is a sore affliction to a mother's heart to have her fond, and proud, and aspiring hopes of an only son crushed—and nothing substituted in their stead, but what she conceives dishonour and degradation. But she knew the depth of her son's affection for Helen Eyre from

his anxiety to restrain and conceal it—and being well aware of his determined character, she perceived that there was no chance of averting from her house the stain of such a marriage, except it were to be found in the quiet and humble soul of the Orphan, who might be dissuaded from entering into a family to which an alliance with her would be considered a disgrace. Mrs Beaumont's agitation at last became manifest—and as frequently feelings are brought to a crisis of a sudden, and by some unexpected movement or sally of temper, so was it now—for Henry discerned what was passing in his mother's mind—and from an uncontrollable impulse, avowed his love for Helen Eyre, and his resolution to make her his wife. "She has confessed that she loves me—and no power on earth has a right to keep us asunder—Mother—I grieve to offend or distress you—but you must receive Helen Eyre as your daughter."

At any other time, this bold avowal would have sent as much anger as grief into the proud spirit of Mrs Beaumont. But she had loved her dead friend with exceeding affection—her voice seemed yet to whisper along the walls—they were all sitting together in deep mourning for her loss—and the meek face of the guileless Orphan was enough to quiet all angry emotion, and to inspire something of the same calm spirit with which it was so serenely suffused. Helen sat almost unmoved, nor did she utter a word. But Henry's mood soon changed, and he knelt down at

his mother's feet, along with the affectionate Constance. Each took hold of one of her hands, kissed it, and bathed it in tears. "O Mother! withhold not your blessing from sweet Helen Eyre," said Constance, with a dewy voice of supplication.—"You know she will be the blessing of Henry's life here, and prepare his soul for Heaven. You know that she will be as loving and dutiful a daughter, even as myself—you know how your friend loved her, and blessed her name to you, and wept for the sake of all her goodness. O Mother! fear not that this marriage wants only your sanction to make it a happy marriage indeed!" The Lady's heart was melted within her, and she said, "Helen Eyre, thou art an Orphan no more—come and kneel down between my children."—Helen did so with many sobs of overwhelming happiness, and bowed down her head almost to the floor. The Mother of her Lover laid her hand upon that head, and blessed her in God's holy name; and then all three rising from their knees, Henry Beaumont pressed Helen Eyre to his bosom, and kissed away her tears then and for ever.

THE END.

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